

READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
READINGTON TOWNSHIP, HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

HOLLAND BROOK SCHOOL  
READINGTON TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 21, 2006  
6:30 P.M.

IN THE MATTER OF

READINGTON TOWNSHIP  
COMMITTEE MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING

.....

B E F O R E:

THE READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

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MAYOR GERARD SHAMEY

JULIA ALLEN

THOMAS AURIEMMA

FRANK GATTI

BEATRICE MUIR

VITA MEKOVETZ, Township Clerk

A P P E A R A N C E S:

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1                   MAYOR SHAMEY: Good evening, ladies  
2                   and gentlemen, I'm sorry for the delay. I  
3                   would like to welcome all of you to the  
4                   February 21, 2006, meeting of the Readington  
5                   Township Committee. I would like to begin by  
6                   announcing all laws governing the Open Public  
7                   Meetings Act have been met, and this meeting  
8                   has been duly advertised.

9                   Let's salute the flag.

10                  (Whereupon, Mayor Shamey led those  
11                  present in the salute to the flag.

12                  MAYOR SHAMEY: This is a meeting of  
13                  the Readington Township Committee, we have  
14                  some things to take care of before we get to  
15                  the public hearings. We have just come out of  
16                  executive session, and we have a couple of  
17                  bits of business to take care of. The first  
18                  item on the executive agenda today was  
19                  personnel, we have a letter from our  
20                  Recreation Director requesting that the  
21                  Committee hire Lisa Hellings as the yoga  
22                  instructor at \$30 an hour.

23                  MS. ALLEN: I will make that motion.

24                  MS. MUIR: I will second that.

1 the affirmative.)

2 MAYOR SHAMEY: The contract  
3 negotiations for the three professional  
4 services contracts that come under contract  
5 negotiations. Is there a motion to approve  
6 the professional services contract of our bond  
7 counsel, McManimon & Scotland, LLC?

8 MS. MUIR: So moved.

9 MR. GATTI: Second.

10 (On roll call, all members voted in  
11 the affirmative.)

12 MAYOR SHAMEY: Next, the professional  
13 services contract for Martin Allen, Esq. as  
14 our tax attorney. Is there a motion to  
15 approve Mr. Allen's professional services  
16 contract?

17 MS. ALLEN: So moved.

18 MR. GATTI: Second.

19 (On roll call, all members voted in  
20 the affirmative.)

21 MAYOR SHAMEY: And lastly, is the  
22 professional services contract for our public  
23 defender, Patrick Clare, Esq. Is there a

24 motion to approve Mr. Clare's professional  
25 services contract?

4

1 MS. ALLEN: So moved.

2 MR. AURIEMMA: Second.

3 (On roll call, all members voted in

4 the affirmative.)

5 MAYOR SHAMEY: Okay. Let me back up a

6 step. We have the consent agenda, all items

7 listed with an asterisk are considered to be

8 routine by the Township Committee and will be

9 covered by one motion. If there is anything

10 that a member or anyone else wishes to bring

11 to our attention, in that case, it will be

12 removed from the general order of business and

13 from its regular sequence on the agenda.

14 These are marked with an asterisk. Any

15 comments or statements from the Committee on

16 the consent agenda? This also, by the way, is

17 for approval of the minutes of January 17,

18 2006, and January 20, 2006.

19 Is there a motion on the consent

20 agenda and approval of minutes for those

21 meetings?

22 MR. AURIEMMA: Motion to approve the

23 consent agenda.

24 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a second?

25 MR. GATTI: Second.

5

1 (On roll call, all members voted in  
2 the affirmative.)

3 MAYOR SHAMEY: Now, we will go quickly  
4 before we get to the public hearing that we  
5 are going to skip over correspondence, there  
6 are three items of correspondence which are on  
7 your agenda, copies of them are up front.

8 Does any member of the Committee have  
9 any comment or question with regard to any of  
10 the three items under consideration? Okay.

11 Moving on to old business, there is  
12 none.

13 Do we want to take care of this piece  
14 of new business or take care of it at the end  
15 when we have the three public hearings?

16 MR. AURIEMMA: Let's do it at the end.

17 MAYOR SHAMEY: The right side says now  
18 and the left side says later. I will break  
19 the tie and suggest that we dispose of this  
20 item now, because it is related to the Triple

21 D, which was covered in executive.  
22 Do you want to speak to this, Julia?  
23 MS. ALLEN: The first item of new  
24 business is an ordinance authorizing the  
25 conveyance of the farmland preservation or

6

1 agricultural development rights, easement to  
2 the Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation  
3 Program. Triple D, LLC, is the 38-acre farm  
4 that we just spoke about, and I would make a  
5 motion to pass the ordinance authorizing the  
6 conveyance of the development rights to  
7 Hunterdon County.

8 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a second?

9 MR. AURIEMMA: Second.

10 MAYOR SHAMEY: Roll call.

11 (On roll call, all members voted in  
12 the affirmative.)

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: The second meeting in  
14 March, is that okay?

15 MS. ALLEN: Yes.

16 MAYOR SHAMEY: Public hearing on that  
17 will be March 20th. Okay.

18 We have four public hearings, and we  
19 will get to the one that most, I assume, most

20 everybody is here for. This is the public  
21 hearing on Ordinance No. 04-2006. Is there a  
22 motion to close the regular meeting and open  
23 the public hearing on this ordinance?

24 MR. AURIEMMA: Moved.

25 MR. GATTI: Second.

7

1 MAYOR SHAMEY: All in favor, say aye.  
2 (On roll call, all members voted in  
3 the affirmative.)

4 MAYOR SHAMEY: By way of introduction,  
5 ladies and gentlemen, this is the public  
6 hearing on Ordinance No. 04-2006, which is an  
7 ordinance that is entitled "Bond Ordinance  
8 Providing for Acquisition of Airport and Land  
9 or Interest in Land for Preservation, Block  
10 48, Lot 23; Block 55, Lot 33; Block 56, Lots  
11 1, 3, 6 and 8; Block 39, Lot 24; and Block 67,  
12 Lot 2, owner: Solberg Aviation/Hromoho), in  
13 and by the Township of Readington, in the  
14 County of Hunterdon, New Jersey, Appropriating  
15 \$22 Million therefor, and Authorizing the  
16 Issuance of \$21,700,000 Bonds or Notes of the  
17 Township to Finance Part of the Cost Thereof."  
18 This ordinance was introduced at this

19 Committee's meeting of February 6, 2006, at  
20 which time the Township Committee also adopted  
21 a resolution which authorized the law firm of  
22 Connell, Foley, LLC, to undertake certain  
23 investigations of the subject property, that  
24 is the property that has just been enumerated,  
25 Solberg Airport and Hromoho Properties.

8

1 The purpose of the investigation is to  
2 conduct preliminary assessments including  
3 investigations and surveys and, more  
4 importantly, to obtain appraisals.

5 Both the bond ordinance, as well as  
6 the resolution I just referred to, are  
7 necessary if we are to continue to have  
8 negotiations with Solberg Aviation about the  
9 future of the airport and about the open space  
10 surrounding it, which are to be meaningful.  
11 The appraisals are, of course, necessary to be  
12 sure the Township has current and accurate  
13 information with which to offer a fair amount  
14 of compensation in our discussions with the  
15 Solbergs and the bond ordinance places the  
16 Committee in a position to make a contingency

17 pre-cash offer to Solberg Aviation for the  
18 open space that the Township is interested in  
19 preserving and for certain development  
20 restrictions on the airport property.

21 It should be noted clearly that  
22 municipal acquisition of the airport is not  
23 contemplated at this time. This is not an  
24 eminent domain ordinance. This is a bond  
25 ordinance. It is the preference of this

9

1 Committee that ownership of the airport remain  
2 in the owners, that is Solberg Aviation. So I  
3 cannot stress enough to you the fact that this  
4 a public hearing on a bond ordinance. Just  
5 give me one moment.

6 The bond ordinance can be analogized  
7 to taking out a home equity line of credit on  
8 your house. What it does is it puts the  
9 Township in a position to draw down on that  
10 allotment of money. If the Committee is to  
11 adopt this ordinance and pass this ordinance  
12 this evening, we will not have spent a dime of  
13 that \$22 million, it is a bond ordinance only.  
14 Again, it puts us in a position to have money  
15 on the table to show the Solbergs and Solberg

16 Aviation that we are serious in our effort to  
17 negotiate a resolution to our issues.

18 So what we are going to do this  
19 evening is as follows: I am going to present  
20 some background information to the audience,  
21 just to get people caught up to date. For  
22 those of you who were not present at the  
23 January 17th informational meeting, it will  
24 help bring you up to date as to recent events.

25 Mrs. Allen will present certain

10

1 information relevant to the various funding  
2 opportunities that are available to the  
3 Township, and funding sources. We will then  
4 have Mr. Gatti, who is our finance liaison,  
5 speak to anticipated tax impact, keeping in  
6 mind that these are hypothetical scenarios  
7 that we will be working with. They are not  
8 numbers to which we can or wish to be bound.  
9 They are examples based upon the hypothetical  
10 home assessed at \$400,000, and they are also  
11 numbers that have been arrived at just by  
12 virtue of our experience and our Farmland and  
13 Open Space Act programs. So again, there are  
14 numbers that we can work with, and they are

15 good examples to use. Again, perhaps not  
16 exact.

17 Following Mr. Gatti's presentation on  
18 tax impact, and he will also speak to the  
19 municipal debt, and all this will move along  
20 as quickly as possible, because we have been  
21 through much of this before.

22 There have been numerous questions  
23 raised, both by residents and in the press,  
24 with regards to the various powers and  
25 authorities of the various levels of

11

1 government that are involved in any situation  
2 such as this, and that is us, the local  
3 government, the State Government and the  
4 Federal Government.

5 Numerous questions have been asked.  
6 Relevant, pointed questions that I am going to  
7 attempt to address and answer to the best of  
8 my abilities.

9 We will then have a public comment  
10 portion following those presentations, and I  
11 will speak more to that procedure that we will  
12 be following for that when we start the public

13 comment portion. So with that said, just a  
14 couple of other things: We intend to  
15 summarize our goals. We will again talk about  
  
16 debt with the funding operations and funding  
17 sources and tax impacts. I note that Mr.  
18 Solberg was in the hallway, but I do not know  
19 if I see him in this room. If any  
  
20 representative of Solberg Aviation wishes to  
21 present any information, they will be given  
22 the opportunity to do so this evening. They  
23 are invited to do so, as they have always been  
  
24 invited to do so. Then again, we will open it  
25 up to the public for comments.

12

1 Now, if you will give us a moment, we  
2 are just going to shift the microphones to  
3 that table and ask Jay Rhatican to vacate, if  
4 he would.

5 Thank you for your patience. We are  
6 trying to figure out the best way to do this  
7 logistically, and this seems to make sense,  
  
8 because we will be referring to certain  
9 slides, and we have other material that we can  
10 work off of. So I will wait for somebody to  
11 tell me that that things is up and we can

12 begin.

13 Mr. Gatti, as soon as you give me the  
14 green light, we will get started.

15 We will begin with slide one. I am  
16 going to move through this as quickly as  
17 possible, ladies and gentlemen, because I know  
18 there are a lot of you that want to comment.  
19 But there is a lot of additional material that  
20 I think needs to be addressed to the public,  
21 and before we start, is there any way that we  
22 can leave some type of light on back here so  
23 maybe I can read?

24 Just to review. The Township has had  
25 longstanding goals of preservation of Solberg

13

1 Airport. Going back to the Township Master  
2 Plan in the mid 1990s, and earlier than that,  
3 this site has been identified by both the  
4 local government, by Hunterdon County and by  
5 the State of New Jersey as a high priority  
6 preservation area. It is always and continues  
7 to be a goal of the Township to maintain the  
8 airport and see the airport maintained in its  
9 current configuration, and when we talk about  
10 configuration, we necessarily talk about

11 runway length. Finally, consistent with  
12 longstanding policies of the Township, it has  
13 always been the goal of this Township for  
14 years, if not decades, for preservation of  
15 this tract and preservation of the 650 acres  
16 of open space surrounding the airport.

17 Now, back in August of 2005, the bond  
18 ordinance which was similar, if not the same  
19 as the ordinance that is here for considera-  
20 tion this evening, was introduced and then  
21 withdrawn by this Committee at its August 22,  
22 2005, meeting. This taking place following an  
23 agreement being reached with Solberg Aviation  
24 to conduct good faith negotiations in an  
25 attempt to resolve this longstanding issue

14

1 that has been here in our township. Six  
2 negotiation sessions took place over a five-  
3 month period. Those were attended by  
4 Committeewoman Allen, then Mayor Gatti, our  
5 counsel, Jay Rhatigan, the three Solbergs and  
6 their lawyer from Morristown, he is an  
7 attorney, Lawrence Berger. I believe that is  
8 it.

9 On January 2, 2006, at the final  
10 negotiation session, the negotiations were  
11 effectively terminated. It was reported back  
12 to this Committee by Mr. Gatti and by Mrs.  
13 Allen that the Township's insistence on  
14 maintenance of this runway length that is  
15 currently 3,735 feet, was of paramount  
16 importance to this Township, and this Township  
17 was not interested in seeing the runway  
18 lengthened at all beyond that length. They  
19 were told at that point that, essentially, we  
20 were wasting our time. This is through their  
21 counsel.

22 The parties got up, they shook hands  
23 and walked out.

24 We then conducted a public information  
25 hearing or meeting, rather, in this room on

15

1 January 17th, and it was at that point that  
2 rather detailed information was presented to  
3 the public with respect to the negotiations,  
4 with respect to some general aviation  
5 materials and information. Environmental  
6 experts spoke, we had a noise expert as well,  
7 and much, if not all, of this information is

8 posted on the Township website and I would  
9 urge our residents to please take the time, if  
10 you can, and review this information. It may  
11 generate questions, comments, criticisms and  
12 what have you. But it has all been posted.

13 Again, on February 6th, the Township  
14 Committee authorized an appraisal to be done  
15 with respect to the property.

16 Slide three. Where are negotiations  
17 today? As reported at the January 17th  
18 meeting, the Township's position is as  
19 follows: The Township is offering Solberg  
20 Aviation \$22 million, and the Solbergs would  
21 retain the airport as it exists today. It  
22 would be preserved. The existing runways  
23 would not be lengthened; however, there is  
24 only 3,000 feet paved right now, and there is  
25 a remaining 735 feet that could be paved.

16

1 That is something that there would be no  
2 objection to. So it keeps the existing  
3 runways not to be lengthened, that is, from  
4 their licensed length. The hangar space, in a  
5 nut shell and, as reported at the January 17th  
6 meeting, Solberg Aviation's initial demand was

7 for a 5,600-foot runway, the same being told  
8 to us as being non-starter or anything less  
9 than that, and then one million square feet of  
10 office and hangar space is being requested.  
11 In the course of the negotiations, the runway  
12 length demand was slid back a bit by Solberg  
13 Aviation to 5,000 feet, and the requested  
14 hangar and office space was reduced to 500,000  
15 square feet.

16 Just by point of comparison,  
17 Morristown Airport, if any of you are familiar  
18 with it, has about 500,000 square feet of  
19 Hangar and office space.

20 The Township would acquire and  
21 preserve the 600 acres of open space. The  
22 open space around the airport would be  
23 permanently preserved, and the cost of up to  
24 \$22 million would be reimbursed through State  
25 open space grants. Mrs. Allen will speak

17

1 specifically as to the funding issues, so I  
2 will not delve into those areas at all right  
3 now. There has been some confusion, and a  
4 little bit of misinformation, as to what is

5 and what is not available, and we will speak  
6 to that.

7 Both the airport and the site's  
8 considerable natural resources would be  
9 protected under this scenario.

10 Currently, as most recently expressed  
11 in the private negotiation sessions that I  
12 referred to, the Solbergs' position is the  
13 following: That the airport be allowed to  
14 expand, in the sense the runway would be paved  
15 out to a 5,000 foot paved primary runway.

16 That is slightly longer than the requested  
17 runway that was contained in the airport  
18 Master Plan and the Airport Layout Plan of  
19 1991, which called for a 4,900 foot runway.

20 For some reason, it has grown to 5,000 from  
21 that. They would also like to pave out to  
22 3,700 feet the cross-winds runway.

23 Now, there is a diagram here that has  
24 been handed out before, and it gives the lay  
25 of the land and configuration of the runways

18

1 with regard to the roads that are nearby, with  
2 regards to the location of the school and the  
3 middle school. So it is helpful to get your

4 hands on that so they can be put into  
5 perspective. They are requesting 500,000  
6 square feet of hangar and office space, and  
7 they have proposed certain restrictions on  
8 noise and nighttime operations, the specifics  
9 of which I am unaware.

10 They also indicated that the future  
11 expansion would be limited per the 1999  
12 Airport Layout Plan, which again the runway  
13 length exceeds that. So obviously, that would  
14 have to be fleshed out a little bit more.

15 The remaining open space over to us  
16 for preservation is those parcels not  
17 necessary or essential to the expansion plans  
18 of the airport. For those parcels which are  
19 rather carved up and scattered throughout the  
20 overall tract, Solberg Aviation is asking \$36  
21 million.

22 We would like to move forward with  
23 more productive negotiations, because we feel  
24 that it is time to negotiate seriously. All  
25 we have had to work with so far with regard to

19

1 the position of Solberg Aviation has come from  
2 two sources, one has been the positions that

3 have been enunciated by Solberg in the private  
4 negotiation sessions which we have made known  
5 to the public, and the other information that  
6 has been presented to the public by Solberg  
7 Aviation is that which has been reported in  
8 the newspaper articles, editorials and letters  
9 that have been sent out by Solberg Aviation.  
10 The two are 100 percent inconsistent with one  
11 another. We need to know the truth. It is  
12 time for some honesty, and we need to know  
13 exactly what the position of Solberg Aviation  
14 is, and we need to hear it from one voice, not  
15 three, one.

16 So it is time to get serious about  
17 negotiations and, therefore, we have  
18 commissioned the appraisals to be commenced  
19 and, therefore, this bond ordinance. We will  
20 put the money on the table for use in our  
21 future negotiations, if they take place.

22 Now, on to slide six. Why \$22  
23 million? Why bond for \$22 million? Well,  
24 this is a not to exceed number. And again,  
25 and analogizing it to taking out a home equity

1 line for \$22 million and spending 10 or 15 or  
2 whatever, it is the same concept. It is a not  
3 to exceed amount. It has some basis,  
4 recently, in our recent offer to the Solbergs  
5 last summer of \$22 million for the 650 acres  
6 of open space, but it is not the offer to  
7 Solberg for the entire tract, including the  
8 airport.

9 Why buy the open space and not the  
10 airport? Well, a couple of reasons. As  
11 indicated earlier, it is the Solberg family's  
12 preference as well as the preference of this  
13 Committee, that ownership of the airport  
14 remain in Solberg Aviation. Readington  
15 Township can achieve its longstanding planning  
16 and policy goals, which stands for four  
17 decades of coming to be in the state they are  
18 in today in terms of our Master Plan and its  
19 amendments, and all of that has gone on for  
20 four decades. Those goals could be  
21 accomplished by preserving the 650 acres of  
22 open space and purchasing the development  
23 easement on the 76 acre airport.

24 At this point, we are going to move to  
25 slide eight, I will turn the microphone over

1 to Committeewoman Julia Allen, who will speak  
2 to open space funding options and the funds  
3 available, and she will attempt to answer,  
4 hopefully, in advance, many of the questions  
5 you may have about funding and also any of the  
6 questions that have already been raised. So I  
7 will turn it over to Mrs. Allen.

8 MS. ALLEN: Good evening. With  
9 respect to open space funding options, the  
10 most heavily relied on funding option for  
11 Readington Township has been and will continue  
12 to be the State Green Acres Program. Under  
13 the State Green Acres Program, there are  
14 several different programs available to  
15 preserve open land. One is the direct State  
16 acquisition. This is a program in which the  
17 State buys the property, it is retained by the  
18 State, and 100 percent of the value is paid  
19 for by the State.

20 Just to summarize, the acquisitions  
21 are made by the State with 100 percent State  
22 funds. The money is still readily available  
23 for projects of statewide significance. The  
24 land is purchased and retained by the State.  
25 The land would be managed by the State as a

1 wild life management area; the land can be  
2 prepurchased by the Township, and this has  
3 been done in five different instances already  
4 in Readington Township. Most recently, the  
5 Fallone property on Rockefeller Mills Road,  
6 and the YEF property on Lamington River.

7 The State is more likely to be  
8 interested in large contiguous tracts for this  
9 program. Solberg Airport is designated as a  
10 natural heritage priority site, making it a  
11 State priority, and Solberg Airport is one of  
12 the best examples of grassland habitat of  
13 threatened and endangered species, and as  
14 such, has statewide priority for preservation.

15 The next, under Green Acres, is the  
16 Municipal Grants Program, and this is a 50  
17 percent share. The grants are available to  
18 townships that have adopted open space plans  
19 and have a dedicated open space tax and an  
20 open space trust fund. Readington has both.  
21 The grants are made at 50 percent of the land  
22 value. Value as in all open space  
23 preservation programs is determined by  
24 appraisals. Readington has obtained grants  
25 for almost ten years under the Municipal

1 Grants Program. The land reserved as a result  
2 of this funding would be owned by the Township  
3 and available for the Township's recreational  
4 purposes, and that would be both active and  
5 passive.

6 The next is the New Jersey  
7 Environmental Infrastructure Trust Program.

8 This is not a grant program, it is a loan  
9 program with low interest. The money comes  
10 from Federal sources, the Federal Clean Water  
11 Act, and the way the low interest loan works,  
12 75 percent of the value is loaned interest  
13 free and 25 percent of the value is loaned at  
14 market rate interest. The Township would own  
15 the preserved land, but the land would have a  
16 conservation easement, which allows absolutely  
17 no disturbance, and possibly some massive  
18 recreation opportunities.

19 The next and last possibility that we  
20 are anticipating, but there are other  
21 possibilities that would be available to us if  
22 we needed them, but the last is the County  
23 Open Space Trust Fund, and that, generally,  
24 traditionally, is paying 20 percent on the  
25 cost share of qualifying projects. The

1           municipality can apply to the County for  
2           financing a project in the Open Space Trust  
3           Fund and they generally approve one that  
4           represents the County Master Plan, and Solberg  
5           property is found on the County Open Space  
6           Plan.

7                        Next slide.

8                        One question that appears to be asked  
9           fairly often is, are open space funds  
10          available? The answer to this question is  
11          predominantly answered by explaining the  
12          provision of the Garden State Preservation  
13          Trust Act. This is an Act that was passed in  
14          1998, after a November 1998 referendum in the  
15          State of New Jersey, because of a favorable  
16          vote. Money was constitutionally dedicated  
17          for open space purposes, a total of \$2 million  
18          over a ten year period from 1999 to 2009, of  
19          which \$1.7 million has already been  
20          appropriated in the fiscal years 2000 to 2006.  
21          There is still some money available for new  
22          projects for fiscal years 2007 to 2009. This  
23          money will be available for new projects, and  
24          this is an iron clad procedure that sets up

25 this money and dedicates it for open space, as

25

1 I said before. It was a constitutional  
2 amendment that set up the trust fund. Undoing  
3 that trust fund would also take a  
4 constitutional amendment, which would include  
5 a vote of all of the citizens of the State of  
6 New Jersey.

7 Needless to say, nobody anticipates  
8 this happening. No governor or legislature  
9 can touch this money and use it for any other  
10 purpose without going back to the voters of  
11 the State of New Jersey. So we are confident  
12 that this money will be available to us, and  
13 the money that has already been allocated,  
14 which in Readington's case is considerable,  
15 will be forthcoming.

16 In the Garden State Preservation Trust  
17 Act funds, both the Green Acres Program and  
18 the Farmland Preservation Program, Green Acres  
19 uses 60 percent of the funding and farmland  
20 preservation is approximately 40 percent.

21 The next source of funding is the  
22 Federal Clean Water Act, and this is the  
23 source of the low interest loan from the New

24 Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust that  
25 is set aside for projects that protect water

26

1 quality. This money is plentiful for  
2 townships that follow a very rigorous grant  
3 application procedure.

4 The third source of money that we  
5 talked about was the County Open Space Trust  
6 Fund, and the citizens of Hunterdon County  
7 recently voted on a three cents per \$100 of  
8 assessed valuation to be collected annually  
9 from all of the townships in Hunterdon County  
10 over the next five years, beginning in 2006.  
11 This is continuing a trust fund that was set  
12 up in the year 2000 and continued through  
13 2005. Readington, last year, in 2005,  
14 contributed almost a million dollars or  
15 \$971,000 to this fund, and Readington is  
16 entitled to reimbursement on projects of its  
17 choice, and projects of importance to the  
18 County. This project, as I mentioned, is on  
19 the County Open Space Fund, so that is about  
20 it.

21 MAYOR SHAMEY: I want to turn it over

22 to Committeeman Frank Gatti, who will speak to  
23 the tax impact on the average homeowner.

24 Do you need help down there?

25 MR. GATTI: No, I am set.

27

1 I just want to state that as a  
2 township, we can bond up to three and a half  
3 percent of our equalized value of property,  
4 which currently stands at approximately \$3  
5 million. So based on today's equalized value  
6 of property in Readington Township, this  
7 Township can bond up to \$103 million, as it  
8 stands right now. Our debt is approximately  
9 \$47 million. Of this amount, the Township is  
10 due approximately \$17 million in reimburse-  
11 ments from farmland preservation and the Open  
12 Space Fund, which Julia Allen just spoke  
13 about.

14 Sixty-five to 70 percent of our debt  
15 comprises land debt. If this bond passes  
16 tonight, our debt will be approximately \$69  
17 million, which represents 2.35 percent of the  
18 equalized assessment basis that I previously  
19 spoke to you about, which is well within the  
20 three and a half percent limit.

21 I would like to point out that our  
22 current bond rating here in the township by  
23 Standard & Poor's is double A, which is one of  
24 the highest ratings. But what is the impact  
25 on the average homeowner? The theoretical

28

1 \$400,000 home, I believe the assessment in  
2 Readington Township is 380,000. For the sake  
3 of numbers, we are using \$400,000. Basically,  
4 what it boils down to is that if we are able  
5 to achieve getting these open space funds,  
6 which we have been very successful in the  
7 past, our long-term bonding would be \$60 per  
8 year for this \$400,000 home. Again, that is  
9 with the anticipated Green Acres grant and the  
10 low interest loans that are available to the  
11 New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust.

12 I would like to point out at this time  
13 that these numbers were calculated by our  
14 chief financial officer, Tom Powers, who works  
15 for us in the township. So the worst case  
16 scenario is none of this will happen. We will  
17 not get the open space. The funds are all not  
18 going to come through.

19 Well, if that is the case, what the

20 Township would be able to do is the Township  
21 will be able to still go ahead and do the  
22 \$22 million bond. We can get notes for a  
23 period of three years and, basically, for  
24 those notes, we will have to pay the interest  
25 only on those notes, and after the three-year

29

1 period, then you are required to bond. So for  
2 the first three years, the impact of this  
3 \$400,000 home would be roughly \$55 a year.

4 After that time, when we do the bonds, we go  
5 out and solicit to various financial  
6 institutions or bond council, and based on  
7 today's rates, it would cost the average

8 homeowner or the average \$400,000 homeowner  
9 about \$65 a year. Starting in the year four,  
10 \$165 per year. Again, this is the worst case  
11 scenario. I want to make sure we are all on

12 the same page as to what the bond is. Even  
13 though we are discussing the bond tonight, we  
14 are, hopefully, going to vote on the bond  
15 tonight. That doesn't mean tomorrow we wake

16 up and start paying the \$65 or \$55 a year.

17 What happens is that gives us the ability to

18 continue negotiations with the family, the  
19 Solberg family and, hopefully, we will be able  
20 to consummate the deal. At which time we will  
21 give them a downpayment, create a contract  
22 with a downpayment and then once, I guess, the  
23 contract is signed, the \$22 million would be  
24 given to the family, and the Township would  
25 have to work on starting the funding. And as

30

1 previously mentioned, this Township has been  
2 successful in the past with prepurchasing land  
3 and then going out and finding money. We have  
4 a fairly good feel for what commitments we  
5 will get ahead of time, and that process has  
6 already been started.

7 I would also like to point out at this  
8 time that based on today's numbers, this  
9 Township does have some additional ratables  
10 that will be coming on in the future for this  
11 Township. We have two senior developments  
12 that are being planned, and in addition, we  
13 have the Belle Mead property up by Route 78,  
14 which could provide for approvals for about  
15 600,000 square feet of office space. So that  
16 will offset the numbers I have discussed.

17                   That is it, thank you.

18                   MAYOR SHAMEY: Thank you very much.

19                   The next area we would like to address is, as

20                   I indicated earlier, just the various levels

21                   of authority and where we stand and all that

22                   as local government. Because issues have been

23                   raised in that regard, and you are asking

24                   questions can this be forced on us and how

25                   does this work. What authority does the local

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1                   government have, et cetera, et cetera. So I

2                   will try to go through this as quickly as I

3                   can.

4                   First of all, by what authority does

5                   the FAA have control over airports? Well,

6                   there are certain statutes, Federal statutes

7                   that are relevant to airports, and those are

8                   the ones enumerated on that slide. I will

9                   read them to you. The Airport and Airway

10                  Improvement Act deals a lot with physical

11                  characteristics, and states among one of its

12                  policies that, "Any airport expansion is

13                  funded through the Act to be undertaken to the

14                  maximum extent feasible." Therefore, it is

15                  based on efficiency and safety. The Airport

16 Noise and Capacity Act, which is known as  
17 ANCA, established a national aviation noise  
18 policy. So generally speaking, under these  
19 Federal statutes that exist and have been  
20 promulgated, numerous Federal regulations  
21 which pre-empt local regulations of airports,  
22 it comes back to the Interstate Commerce laws  
23 of the United States Constitution. If an  
24 airport owner accepts Federal funds, the  
25 airport must comply with a host of these

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1 regulations, including prohibition on  
2 discrimination of types of aircraft. As I  
3 said, the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of  
4 1990, it manages the national noise policy,  
5 and the FAA has interpreted this to mean that  
6 local issues relating to noise must take a  
7 back seat to national policy. And I will cite  
8 a case on that shortly.

9 Again, if the airport owner accepts  
10 FAA money, it comes with grant conditions in  
11 the form of restrictions of what you can do in  
12 terms of limitation on noise and operations.  
13 I have already spoken about the Airport Noise

14 and Capacity Act.

15 The regulations under that Act are not  
16 dependent upon Federal funding, but the  
17 failure to comply with them renders an airport  
18 operator unable to receive that Federal  
19 funding. So the FAA is concerned, their main  
20 focus in on operations and noise and the like.

21 On the State level, that would  
22 probably take us to the next slide. There is  
23 State legislation, this is slide 12, by what  
24 authority does the State of New Jersey have  
25 control over airports? We have the State

33

1 Aviation Act, which entrusts the supervision  
2 of aeronautics to the Commissioner of  
3 Transportation, and the New Jersey Airport  
4 Safety Act of 1983 broadened the  
5 Commissioner's power.

6 Now, on the State level, first of all,  
7 much has been raised about what land use  
8 control does the municipality have. Well, the  
9 municipality already has diminished land use  
10 control as a result of the State legislation,  
11 which restricts the heights and the land use  
12 of sensitive areas around the runways. But

13 there is still some site plan control on the  
14 local level. Even if a local site plan --  
15 even a local site plan approval would be  
  
16 restricted in the event of an FAA funding  
17 being received, and the FAA, generally, takes  
18 the position that local planning controls are  
19 pre-empted by Federal law. Additionally, on  
  
20 the State level, the New Jersey DOT  
21 regulations bar an airport from having planes  
22 use the airport as long as the planes are  
23 physically capable to use the airport as  
  
24 applied by the FAA regulations.

25 Just to talk a little bit about the

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1 local level and bring it all together to the  
2 best that I can -- first, one last thing on  
3 State law, that requires that the State law --  
  
4 the State law requires that N.J. DOT approve  
5 any airport expansion such as that proposed by  
6 the Solbergs in the 1997 Master Plan. NJ DOT  
7 is empowered to override any local decisions,  
  
8 if to do so is in the best interest of the  
9 State Aviation policies. Although land use is  
10 not pre-empted by State law, the local  
11 Planning Boards or Board of Adjustment would

12 retain site plan review and approval powers,  
13 and although the NJ DOT must give some  
14 consideration to those authorities, Board of  
15 Adjustment, Planning Board, they need not  
  
16 defer to their decisions. In other words, the  
17 State has the final say, not the Federal  
18 Government.

19 Now, a couple of other things about  
  
20 local zoning: Although the underlying zoning  
21 does not permit an airport use and would  
22 otherwise require a variance for expansion of  
23 a non-conforming use, that is due to the fact  
  
24 that the airport is grandfathered in. It is  
25 in a residential zone, it is a pre-existing

35

1 non-conforming use, so to expand as it stands  
2 today, one would have to go to the Board of  
3 Adjustment for a variance. This is New Jersey  
  
4 law that does require host municipalities to  
5 enable an ordinance to make it a conforming  
6 use. Readington has never enacted such an  
7 ordinance. That ordinance was litigated at  
  
8 one point, and although upheld as to  
9 constitutionality, this is the statute

10 requiring us to rezone that I am talking  
11 about. The Court ruled that the case really  
12 was not what they call ripe for adjudication.  
13 They didn't come to a ruling on it, and the  
14 reason they didn't come to a ruling on that  
15 statute is that the DOT had not yet  
16 promulgated the regulations that that Act  
17 requires. So the process was not yet  
18 complete. There is nothing to work to in  
19 terms of regulations that would implement that  
20 statute. We have never adopted that  
21 ordinance. We have never, although there was  
22 discussion between the Township and the State  
23 many years ago about adopting such an  
24 ordinance, those discussions ended and we do  
25 not -- right now it is a pre-existing non-

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1 conforming use.

2 With an application to be made for  
3 expansion and denied, of course, it would  
4 invite litigation, at which time maybe that  
5 statute would be litigated again.

6 How does that all tie together? How  
7 likely is it that this would happen? How  
8 would it all play itself out? That is the

9 real question here, I think.

10 Solberg Airport is a designated

11 reliever airport under a Federal -- it is

12 called the National Plan of Integrated Airport

13 Systems. This is a 2005-2009 report, and

14 Solberg Airport, Solberg Aviation both

15 requested and then received reliever airport

16 status. What that does is it allows the

17 airport -- it makes that airport eligible as a

18 sponsor to accessing grant funding for the

19 Airport Improvement Fund. All control over

20 what improvements are planned for an airport

21 are initiated by the airport sponsor. So I

22 want to be clear about that. It is not that

23 the FAA goes around the country looking for

24 airports to expand, the sponsor comes to them.

25 So the expansion plans are initiated

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1 by the sponsor and approved and potentially

2 funded by the FAA, and that is without any

3 intervention or input by local or State

4 authority, which I will get to in a moment.

5 The process of expansion is laid out

6 in Federal regulations, and this is what took

7 place starting back in 1997 to 1999 and 2000.

8 The sponsor develops an airport Master Plan  
9 which was done, which was then reviewed and  
10 determined to be complying with FAA regs, and  
11 then an Airport Layout Plan was drawn up based  
12 on that document. The FAA gave Solberg  
13 Aviation, back in 1999, conditional approval  
14 of its Airport Improvement Plan and its  
15 Airport Layout Plan. We need to be clear and  
16 to remember that that has already been done,  
17 and that was based upon a 4,890 foot main  
18 runway. I was involved in that process as  
19 well as many members of the Committee, and the  
20 sponsor has to conduct an environmental  
21 assessment based upon something called the FAA  
22 Environmental Handbook, and the sponsor has to  
23 come up with a finding of no significant  
24 impact in a variety of areas. That would be  
25 noise, air pollution, impact on historic

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1 sites, water resources, et cetera. If any  
2 area does not meet the appropriate standard,  
3 then you must do a full environmental impact  
4 study. It is a higher level of scrutiny, but  
5 only as to those items that don't pass muster

6 the first time.

7 This process was started by Solberg

8 Aviation through a consultant hired by the

9 State of New Jersey called Clough Hargher, and

10 I participated in those proceedings, as did

11 Mrs. Allen and others on the Committee.

12 Before I speak to those a little bit further,

13 I just wanted to back up a step.

14 The Master Plan and Airport Layout

15 Plan of Solberg Aviation, again, they are

16 conditionally approved by the FAA and the DOT

17 of 1999. It should be noted that both of

18 these approvals were granted over strong local

19 objections, including written objections from

20 the Readington Township Committee and

21 Branchburg Township Committee, the Somerset

22 County Board of Freeholders, our State

23 Senators and Assembly people, over those

24 strong local objections, and statewide on the

25 part of our State representatives. Those were

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1 ignored. The FAA granted conditional

2 approval.

3 Troubling evidence of how much import

4 they give to the concerns of the community.

5                   So that process took place, and I  
6 participated in it, but when I use the word  
7 "participate", I use it loosely and  
8 facetiously. That is because when the process  
9 gets to that point, and we have been there,  
10 we, the local governing body, we, the  
11 community of Readington Township, we cease  
12 being participants and we are then spectators.

13                   This was a self-fulfilling prophesy,  
14 there was no doubt in anyone's mind what the  
15 outcome of those proceedings was going to be.

16                   The only thing that stopped them was the  
17 Township had commenced its eminent domain  
18 proceedings and the State went in and went  
19 with the Solbergs.

20                   In terms of public input of this  
21 environmental assessment, it consisted of  
22 going into a rather large room and you can sit  
23 with somebody at a table, log in your  
24 comments, your concerns and what have you.  
25 There would be a table relative to noise,

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1                   relative to water quality or whatever. It  
2 wasn't this large participatory meeting where  
3 representatives of the State and a consulting

4 firm were asked questions directly and had to  
5 answer them in front of others, it was kind of  
6 a booth kind of setup.

7 In addition to that, we also conducted  
8 a series of, I won't call them hearings, they  
9 are more like meetings, and those were  
10 attended by representatives of Readington,  
11 Branchburg, Hunterdon and Somerset County  
12 Chambers of Commerce, Solberg Aviation, and I  
13 am trying to think of who else participated in  
14 those hearings. What those meetings were, it  
15 was not a give-and-take session, it was simply  
16 reporting back to us what the findings were.  
17 Again, it was non-participatory, it was just  
18 that here is what we have, the process as I  
19 stated publicly before, and I stated it  
20 directly to the State hired consultants, the  
21 process was insulting, at best.

22 The treatment of real estate values,  
23 for example, in one of the reports they  
24 issued, and again they were 80 to 90 percent  
25 complete, the only thing left was a final

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1 report and a finding, and we all had no doubt

2 that there was going to be a finding of  
3 significant impact. But just as an example of  
4 how ridiculous this was and how insulting this  
5 was, in my view, the treatment as to the  
6 proposed impact on the expansion of real  
7 estate values was a scant paragraph on the  
8 bottom of one page that talked about how a few  
9 realtors had been consulted and then felt  
10 maybe, except for a certain few areas,  
11 generally speaking, it really shouldn't have  
12 any impact on real estate values. That was  
13 it. So the process was a cruel joke.

14 The question has been raised, if you  
15 can give me a minute here, is there a clear  
16 and present danger of an expansion and can it  
17 happen. Well, you know, corporate jet travel  
18 is alive and well. Teterboro and Morristown  
19 are at capacity. Small jet manufacturers and  
20 operators are expanding operations nationwide.  
21 Current capacity, again, is strained. The  
22 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems,  
23 although this is a planning document, it is  
24 not a budget document, but it does set aside a  
25 line item of, I'm sorry, \$12,750,000 for

1 improvements at Solberg Airport. When Mr.  
2 Solberg circulated a letter to the public  
3 saying it is an absolute lie by the officials  
4 and no monies have been allocated, there was  
5 some play on semantics going on there. The  
6 fact of the matter is no, it is not on the  
7 pipeline, but it is on the planning document  
8 and, rather quickly, it can be placed into  
9 that pipeline, because the only thing that  
10 really needs to happen for this to move  
11 forward would be updating of the Master Plan  
12 and completion of the environmental assessment  
13 process.

14 I don't have any faith in that process  
15 whatsoever, and I don't think anyone else on  
16 this Committee does.

17 We covered the State, and I think I  
18 really already went over the slide about  
19 municipal authority over airports, and we will  
20 move on from there and just talk about a  
21 couple of other issues of concern and raise a  
22 few other points here.

23 We understand that there has been some  
24 polling that has been taking place. We want  
25 the residents to know that the Township has

1 absolutely nothing to do with the polling. We  
2 haven't commissioned it, and I am in receipt  
3 of a handout that was brought in tonight from  
4 Mr. Solberg that indicates that apparently  
5 this was his poll and some of you can believe  
6 what you may, but obviously -- I will say  
7 this, that Frank Gatti and I had an  
8 opportunity to talk about polling with Mr.  
9 Solberg once before, and that was in the  
10 spring of last year when we met at the gazebo  
11 at the park, and this is when the first poll  
12 had come out, and we have had many residents  
13 tell us the kind of questions being asked and  
14 so forth. I asked Mr. Solberg, we had asked  
15 him for a copy of the questions at that time,  
16 can we see the questions being asked of  
17 residents. "Well, you can see some of those  
18 questions." "Well, why can't we see all of  
19 the questions?" "Because some of those  
20 questions are proprietary." "Well, does that  
21 mean no answer?" I have, to date, not seen  
22 one question that was asked of the residents  
23 other than that which was reported to me or to  
24 the rest of this Committee as to questions  
25 being asked.

1                   There has been a lot of information  
2                   out in the public. This Township Committee,  
3                   we have posted everything humanly possible on  
4                   our website. Again, I urge you to visit that  
5                   website. I will also say that we will make  
6                   this -- we will continue to make this process  
7                   as transparent as possible. The information  
8                   that we have laid out for the public is  
9                   information that is truthful and accurate and  
10                  reflects what has taken place over the last  
11                  many months. Our public positions and  
12                  pronouncements will now and will continue to  
13                  be consistent with the positions we take in  
14                  any private negotiations with Solberg  
15                  Aviation.

16                  Now, a lot of questions have been  
17                  submitted. They can be answered either by way  
18                  of our consultants or one of us online. There  
19                  is the Mayor's e-mail, I am doing the best I  
20                  can in answering all of those. This folder  
21                  here is the ones that I haven't answered yet.  
22                  If anybody has e-mailed me or called me and  
23                  not gotten a response yet, I want you to know  
24                  you will get one, and I want you to know that  
25                  I don't know when you will get one, but you

1 will get one as soon as I can get one to you.  
2 I promise you that. In the middle of this, I  
3 am also trying to make a living, so I can only  
4 spend so much time on that. But they will be  
5 answered.

6 Technical questions, pass them along  
7 and we will pass them along to the  
8 consultants.

9 A couple of other things and then we  
10 will wrap it up here. Okay. That is as much  
11 information as we are able to present to the  
12 public at this time. There is a lot to it, it  
13 is complicated when you get involved with  
14 various levels of authority, Federal, State,  
15 local -- in any event, I just want to address  
16 a few other things.

17 We can't stress enough how much this  
18 township will change if the runway is allowed  
19 to be lengthened and Federal funds are  
20 accepted to do so, because in order to  
21 implement the plan of Solberg Aviation, the  
22 only way to do it is to accept Federal monies,  
23 and when you accept Federal monies, you are  
24 locked in in terms of restrictions on  
25 operations, restrictions on noise and the

1           like. I can give you a good example of that,  
2           if you bear with me, the City of Naples is an  
3           example, they are in Florida. They own a  
4           municipal airport and passed an ordinance  
5           banning Stage 2 jets. That is somewhat older  
6           and noisier jets. It is a 1961 study, a noise  
7           study, and owners of those jets sued the City  
8           stating it was a violation of the commerce  
9           laws of the Constitution. It was upheld in  
10          the Federal Court and in the State Court. The  
11          FAA tried to say the noise study had defects,  
12          and they tried to block the ban. The FAA  
13          argued they weren't bound by the Federal Court  
14          decision, and since they received Federal  
15          grants, they could decide if the Naples ban  
16          violated Federal law.

17                 The FAA did just that, they determined  
18                 the noise ban violated the Federal law, the  
19                 Federal Grant Agreement, and was pre-empted by  
20                 Federal law.

21                 So that is a classic example. A  
22                 recent example of how acceptance of Federal  
23                 money restricts you significantly in terms of

24 operations and in terms of noise.

25 So why are we here tonight? You are

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1 about to begin the public comments on this  
2 bond ordinance. One thing that hasn't been  
3 addressed is the impact of the proposed  
4 expansion on property values. We talked about  
5 quality of life, but we should also remember  
6 that property values are at stake. We have  
7 questions about the cost of the acquisition,  
8 and rightfully so. But we need to set those  
9 questions against the cost of lower property  
10 values for all of us, if the expansion goes  
11 through.

12 A lot of people are asking why are you  
13 doing this. Why are you pursuing these  
14 options? And in my view, and that of this  
15 Committee, I believe the cost of inaction is  
16 too high. I would not be able to sleep at  
17 night if I were to leave this Committee and  
18 leave this to come what may in the future.  
19 This has gone on for far too long, and it is  
20 time for some closure.

21 I don't want to see through inaction  
22 something happen that will change the

23 character of this town irrevocably. And I  
24 particularly don't want to see it while I am  
25 sitting up here and neither does the rest of

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1 this Committee. We have a responsibility to  
2 act in the best interests of the community.  
3 I wanted to speak a little bit to the  
4 issue of a mediator that was proposed. I am  
5 100 percent opposed at this point to a  
6 mediator, and I think it would be an  
7 abrogation of my responsibilities and those of  
8 this Committee to hand this issue over to a  
9 mediator who, in all likelihood, will just  
10 split the difference, because the mediator has  
11 no stake in this. The mediators -- the  
12 Township has goals, Solberg Aviation has  
13 goals, the mediator's goal is resolution of a  
14 dispute. So I don't want to hand that off to  
15 somebody else, and I will also vote against  
16 that, unless we are down to the -- we are on  
17 the eve of a wonderful resolution of all of  
18 our issues, and we have achieved all of our  
19 goals and there are some things to iron out.  
20 Maybe at that point it would be helpful, but  
21 whether or not to accept business jets isn't

22 any kind of a numerical split the difference  
23 question. You don't look to the middle  
24 ground, and in the view of this Committee, any  
25 expansion of this runway beyond the licensed

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1 3,735 feet, will irrevocably, it will pave the  
2 way for corporate jets and will forever change  
3 the face of this township.

4 So we will not leave our natural  
5 resources or open space policies and our  
6 community character to the whim and chance of  
7 a third party that we don't know, who comes  
8 walking in here from out of town and says, "I  
9 can help you guys work this out."

10 I am not interested in meeting that  
11 person. Readington should plan Readington.

12 (Applause.)

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: Thank you. I think  
14 I've talked enough. I am sure you all agree  
15 with that.

16 Now, the public hearing, give me one  
17 more minute here to find one piece of paper.  
18 What we will do is lift the screen, turn on  
19 some lights up here and shift back over here

20 and we will open. Before we open the meeting,  
21 I will ask the Committee if they have anything  
22 to say, if any Committee members have anything  
23 further to add to what was presented.

24 We will open the microphone for public  
25 comments and, in keeping with past procedure

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1 with meetings of this size, we will limit each  
2 speaker's time to two minutes. However, we  
3 will, of course, be reasonable and we will be  
4 flexible. We will make every reasonable  
5 effort possible that everybody can be heard.  
6 We ask that everybody extend the courtesies  
7 they would expect from their neighbors when  
8 they are speaking. Please don't interrupt  
9 each other. Please listen to the comments of  
10 the other speakers to save some time. If you  
11 hear a comment which has been made before,  
12 perhaps we can move on to the next speaker to  
13 avoid repetition, and receive as much input as  
14 possible from the public.

15 I ask when you come to the microphone  
16 that you sign in and identify yourself by name  
17 and residence address. Be sure to speak  
18 clearly into the microphone so the

19 Stenographer can take down everything that you  
20 have said.  
21 Let us get resituated, and we will get  
22 started.  
23 One other thing, if you could spell  
24 your name for the record as well. With regard  
25 to questions, we can't entertain questions

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1 from the podium because, based upon past  
2 experience, although we may want to try to  
3 answer a question quickly and get something  
4 out of the way, and that is my tendency to try  
5 to do that, but oftentimes it leads into a  
6 question-and-answer session, and one speaker  
7 takes up too much time and other people don't  
8 get to speak. So if you do have a question,  
9 you can go ahead and ask it, and we will be  
10 taking down as many of your questions as we  
11 can, and at the conclusion of the public  
12 comments, the Committee will answer as many  
13 questions as possible. If you feel yourself  
14 that your question hasn't been answered, hand  
15 it in in writing to me or to Vita and make  
16 sure to give your name, address and phone  
17 number and your e-mail address and we will get

18 you an answer as soon as possible.  
19 Again, we are not going to be able to  
20 engage in a debate. This is a public comment  
21 on an ordinance. What we will try to do --  
22 before we begin, does any member of the  
23 Committee have anything they would like to add  
24 to any of the information that has been  
25 presented so far?

52

1 MR. AURIEMMA: I would like to speak  
2 to one point that wasn't mentioned this  
3 evening. I would like to speak to the letter  
4 that Mr. Solberg sent to the members of our  
5 Township last week in an effort to keep us all  
6 informed. Unfortunately, I think there was  
7 some misinformation in this letter, most of  
8 which was corrected this evening. However,  
9 there was one line that I would like to see  
10 supported by the airport owners this evening,  
11 and that line is "We are happy with the  
12 airport the way it is."

13 With utmost respect to Mr. Solberg, I  
14 think you need to reaffirm your intentions to  
15 the residents this evening. If you are happy

16 with the airport as it exists, you need to  
17 commit to this community that you will not  
18 expand the runway beyond its current 3,735  
19 feet in perpetuity.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. AURIEMMA: And that you, your  
22 sisters and business partners will put pen to  
23 paper and make a commitment of no expansion to  
24 the residents of Readington Township.

25 (Applause.)

53

1 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there anything  
2 further from the Committee? Okay. Following  
3 our normal procedure, what we will do here is  
4 start in the front row. We could start in the  
5 back row, but -- no, we will start in the  
6 front row. We will go across and do both  
7 sides of the room. If you would like to  
8 speak, you can start to queue up, if you will,  
9 at the microphone to keep things moving.

10 MR. VERNON: My name is Ray Vernon,  
11 and I live on Rockefeller Mills Road.

12 I say if this is supposed to be for  
13 the township, let the people of the township  
14 decide our fate, not you people up there who

15 are lying to us. You understand that the  
16 changes and all the grants you have to meet,  
17 it is not going to be a grant, it is going to  
18 be a loan. You will not get the money from  
19 the State, you are going to have to borrow the  
20 money, which means it will come out of our  
21 pockets, your pockets, your pockets, your  
22 pockets and your pocket. It will come out of  
23 everybody's pocket here.

24 They also put in here that if you give  
25 farmland preservation, and if you also try to

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1 go in for a tax deduction on farmland  
2 assessment, apparently, that will no longer be  
3 allowed. The State is in debt. This County  
4 is in debt. They are going to start cutting  
5 money someplace. They are going to start  
6 holding back and making it harder for people  
7 to get money, and they are doing it here. You  
8 have to read the criteria of about 5,000  
9 people per square mile. No Hunterdon  
10 municipality comes close to that figure.

11 When this battle all started -- when  
12 did it start? What year?

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: This is public comment.

14 MR. VERNON: I was just wondering,  
15 because once again, if you push the runway in  
16 and you put a field in, even if you go in your  
17 safety map, it is out of the safety zone. I  
18 don't want to see what happened up at  
19 Teterboro happen here, nobody does. But let  
20 the people decide their fate. Let them do it.

21 Even if you are against it, even if  
22 you are against the airport, then let the  
23 people vote on this. Don't let these people  
24 tell you the way it is supposed to be, you  
25 have to decide for yourself. You are supposed

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1 to be a government for the people, not the  
2 selective people up there on stage. Thank  
3 you.

4 MAYOR SHAMEY: Thank you.

5 MS. MEKOVETZ: Will you sign your  
6 name, sir, we're trying to keep a record of  
7 who spoke.

8 MAYOR SHAMEY: Okay, next.

9 MS. KRUG: My name is Ingelore Krug at  
10 20 Old Readington Road in Whitehouse Station.

11 MAYOR SHAMEY: You have to get in

12 closer to the microphone.

13 MS. KRUG: What can I tell you?

14 MAYOR SHAMEY: Just speak up a little,  
15 if you would. The mike should pick it up.

16 MS. KRUG: I have been a resident of  
17 Readington Township since 1962. At that time,  
18 there was this thing about the jetport is  
19 coming, the jetport is coming. I have lived  
20 with the airport all these years that I have  
21 been here. My son learned to fly at the  
22 airport, he is a pilot, he flies for American  
23 Airlines. He flies commuter planes. I asked  
24 him about the length of the runway, could he  
25 land the plane that he flies for American

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1 Airlines on that runway, and he said oh, yes,  
2 he could, but he would not be able to take  
3 off, because that would not be long enough. I  
4 can't tell you what he is flying, it is a  
5 commuter and it is a jet.

6 I want to urge everybody to vote for  
7 our freedom for the fact that we should be  
8 able to live in peace and harmony and don't  
9 give us any more taxes that we can't afford.  
10 I am one of the oldest people here, and I am

11 being forced out. My son was forced out, he  
12 couldn't afford to live here. Thank you.

13 MR. LISKOVEC: My name is Larry  
14 Liskovec, Old Farm Road.

15 This is the first meeting I have  
16 attended. I want to thank all of you for  
17 having saved so much of the property that  
18 there is around here for preservation.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. LISKOVEC: I would also like to  
21 make two statements: One is that I hope you  
22 bring this to a conclusion, a final,  
23 irrevocable conclusion, and I hope you do not  
24 limit yourself in the means you have available  
25 to yourself. The last statement I wish to

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1 make is I am perfectly willing to pay  
2 additional taxes, ten times anything you  
3 project tonight so that this matter is  
4 resolved.

5 With that, thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. RUDD: If I had known this type of  
8 thing was taking place nine years ago when I  
9 bought my house in Whitehouse, I probably

10 would have not purchased it. I would not have  
11 purchased it or come into this area, I would  
12 have gone elsewhere. That would have affected  
13 property values, less than people purchasing  
14 here.

15 MS. DRAGAN: You have to allow the  
16 speakers to say their piece. We have a Court  
17 Reporter here who is trying to take down an  
18 accurate transcript of the hearing, and she  
19 can't do it with people doing cat calls and  
20 other things in the back. Please.

21 MR. MELLOOS: My name is Joe Mellos,  
22 and I have lived here for the past 33 or 34  
23 years, whatever it is. All I could say is no  
24 more taxes. I pay already \$8,190 a year for  
25 taxes that I pay, this is too much money. Who

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1 is this committee there to protect the  
2 taxpayers? Nobody, every year the taxes go up  
3 and up and up, and no more taxes. I feel that  
4 the airport there, there must be opportunities  
5 for the insiders who will make this happen.  
6 For instance, I have here a flyer about Ms.  
7 Julia Allen saying we will get \$44,000, that

8 is the taxpayers, that is the money. Now I  
9 can't say, for the Committee, I don't know,  
10 because that is what I see, and I don't know  
11 what is going on. I hear Ms. Allen now make  
12 it sound like this would not cost the  
13 taxpayers anything. Why do we need the 22  
14 million, then? Why can't we have Solberg  
15 speak his mind here in front of everybody to  
16 say what he has to say? We only hear one side  
17 of the story every time. Why can't he say  
18 something? The citizens don't want to pay  
19 more taxes in this county. Thank you. No  
20 more taxes, that is all I have to say.

21 MAYOR SHAMEY: Before we take any  
22 further public comments, one thing I stated,  
23 we would like to give the Solbergs the  
24 opportunity to be heard or to present any  
25 information. I saw Mr. Solberg in the

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1 hallway. Is any member of the Solberg  
2 Aviation in the audience that would like to be  
3 heard? I guess he didn't want to come in the  
4 room.

5 MR. JONES: My name is Michael Jones,  
6 33 Oakland Drive West in Whitehouse Station.

7 I did not live here for as long as  
8 many people in this audience and certainly not  
9 as long as people who sit on the Municipal  
10 Council, but it seems like we have had a  
11 love/hate relationship with this facility for  
12 quite some time. It is kind of ironic that  
13 the use that predated the first zoning  
14 ordinance in our community is now a pre-  
15 existing non-conforming use. After all, the  
16 airport was here before most of us that are  
17 sitting in this room today. I think that is  
18 something that we should think about.

19 We are here about a bond issue. I  
20 have something to say on the bond itself, the  
21 whole process. It was stated by Mr. Gatti  
22 earlier this evening, that we have approxi-  
23 mately \$47 million in municipal debt and  
24 approximately \$17 million of that are due back  
25 to our municipality from open space funds. I

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1 hope that someone could address how long we  
2 have been waiting for those funds; what the  
3 likelihood of the success of the application  
4 to secure those funds might be, and how the  
5 bonds are structured to ensure that we don't

6 pay a penalty in an attempt to redeem or pay  
7 off these debts prior to their full maturity.

8 The plan, I understand from the \$22 million  
9 that you wish to borrow, would permit us to  
10 recuperate those dollars with the grant  
11 programs, but no one really addressed how,  
12 actually, we would pay the bonds, what impact  
13 that has on the bond rate that we would  
14 receive, one; and initially, we would obtain  
15 the bonds. I saw a little difference between  
16 three-year notes and a longer-term bond.

17 The financial impact of that has not  
18 been made clear from some of the material that  
19 I have read on the municipal website.

20 The second comment I wanted to make is  
21 when you look at the tax revenue from the  
22 airport, at present we presently receive about  
23 \$59,000 in taxes from the airport as a whole.

24 Of that, \$56,000 comes from only 56 acres.  
25 Yet when you look at the map that was provided

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1 by the municipality in the recent mailing, it  
2 showed what I would describe as a cross -- it  
3 showed runways, the developed portion of the

4 property and all of the buffer zones that the  
5 FAA requires around the runways, in order for  
6 them to maintain and operate an airport up to  
7 FAA standards. The sum of the area of the  
8 land outlined on that map far exceeds 56  
9 acres. Why have we not been taxing all of the  
10 land used as principally commercial property  
11 as such, simply because the Solbergs have  
12 grown hay or corn on some of the property that  
13 they have to have in order to operate the  
14 airport. That tax is agricultural.

15 MR. AURIEMMA: I ask you to wrap it  
16 up.

17 MR. JONES: Lastly, talking about  
18 preservation of this property as open space, I  
19 would hope that the water quality issues would  
20 be addressed more broadly rather than simply  
21 looking at the airport. Chambers Brook is not  
22 one of the waterways in this community that is  
23 monitored at all. It is not part of the South  
24 Branch Watershed Association, nor the Rockaway  
25 Creek Water Association. It is a natural

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1 habitat at present. I hope that the water  
2 quality on the airport will extend to water

3 quality concerns for the other contributories  
4 in Chambers Brook. Thank you very much.

5 MRS. CROWTHER: Marlene Crowther, 155  
6 Stanton Road.

7 I want to thank you all again for your  
8 efforts, and please keep it up. I think the  
9 township, the people, are definitely behind  
10 you. That was shown at the last Township  
11 election, so please keep it up. Thank you.

12 MR. MITCHELL: My name is James  
13 Mitchell, and I live on Main Street in  
14 Whitehouse.

15 As the gentleman over here stated, he  
16 said just said if you are making the decisions  
17 -- obviously, at the last election, you were  
18 elected by the people. It is no secret, the  
19 majority of the people don't want it expanded,  
20 and I think, you know, everybody has the right  
21 to a business, but when it bothers everybody  
22 else's property, the thing that hasn't been  
23 brought up here, your values will go down.

24 I looked at the traffic, the traffic  
25 you have on Main Street now, and what do you

1 think it would be if they had more warehousing

2 and more of these things where these companies  
3 will have their CEOs flying in here left and  
4 right. Do you think you will have less  
5 traffic? What do you think your taxes will go  
6 up then to fix the roads and get more police  
7 and retirement for the police. Nobody wants  
8 to hear that.

9 Every action has a reaction.  
10 Everybody forgets the reaction when that gets  
11 expanded. What it does to the rest of us -- I  
12 also state one thing, and I have been here  
13 over and over and Mr. Solberg has been invited  
14 to come up here, and he is out there now, but  
15 he can't come in here. So that shows the  
16 cowardice of the man when he can't come in and  
17 face these people. Thank you.

18 MR. HANNIGAN: My name is Bob  
19 Hannigan, and I live at 5 John Reading Road.

20 I don't want to begin this way, but I  
21 would like to say that Mr. Solberg, I have  
22 known Mr. Solberg, and he is no coward. He  
23 has been at plenty of these meetings.

24 A VOICE: Then where is he?

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: Please don't call out.

1 MR. HANNIGAN: He has made many  
2 proposals, and he has tried to negotiate in  
3 good faith.

4 This is a meeting of a different  
5 feather, it is our meeting, it is not his  
6 meeting.

7 I moved to this township eight and a  
8 half years ago, and I saw signs on the side of  
9 the road "No airport expansion." I have  
10 listened to all of the debates. I have gone  
11 to many meetings. When two parties enter  
12 into a negotiation, there is give and take on  
13 both sides. I see give on the Solbergs side,  
14 I see no give on this side.

15 There will never be a successful  
16 negotiation until the two parties agree to  
17 negotiate fairly. This issue has been used  
18 over and over again for campaigning. I think  
19 these folks have been on a committee, and they  
20 passed the mayorship from one person to the  
21 next person to the next person, and I don't  
22 know who will have it next, but it is  
23 completely political. This thing should have  
24 been settled a long time ago. I don't know  
25 how much in legal fees that they have spent

1 over the years now, but I think that in three  
2 months that you folks should have this thing  
3 negotiated fairly with the Solbergs with no  
4 taxpayer money coming out of it. If you can't  
5 get it down in three months, please resign.

6 MAYOR SHAMEY: If you can do that,  
7 then we want you.

8 MR. STECKLOW: My name is James  
9 Stecklow, 396 Ferncrest Court.

10 I would like to talk to Mr. Gatti  
11 after the meeting, because I have a  
12 hypothetical question to ask you. Rather than  
13 try to discuss it here tonight, I would like  
14 to ask it from both sides.

15 MR. GATTI: Okay.

16 MAYOR SHAMEY: We are going to go row  
17 by row. Next. If you are in the front row,  
18 then you should have been up.

19 Is there anybody else?

20 MR. PETERS: My name is Ted Peters,  
21 and I want to thank you for the opportunity to  
22 allow me to speak tonight.

23 I am a long-time resident of  
24 Readington Township, and I am also a long-time  
25 participant on the issue at hand tonight. I

1 was involved in these issues since 1983, with  
2 the airport. As you probably know, that act  
3 was the genesis of it. During the past two  
4 decades since that time, Township monies have  
5 been spent on the effort of keeping Readington  
6 rural.

7 At the present juncture, the goals of  
8 the Township and those of the airport are  
9 contraindicated. This meant getting involved,  
10 which I did, and eventually leading up to the  
11 formation of BRAC, which involves Branchburg  
12 and Readington Townships. It is an organiza-  
13 tion of like-minded individuals. Over the  
14 years, BRAC supported growth, in view of the  
15 action being taken by the Township to maintain  
16 the status of the Solberg Airport. This was a  
17 common issue then and it still is now. Our  
18 support is to at least offer 4,000 area  
19 persons whose opinion was in concert with that  
20 of the Township Committee to achieve that  
21 result. Twice in the last few years, our  
22 supporters were disappointed. There was a  
23 decision by the Committee that all avenues had  
24 to be covered to reach an amicable agreement  
25 as to the status of our airport, which had not

1           been adequately addressed. As far as I am  
2           able to ascertain, negotiations completed to  
3           this point have outlined the Township's  
4           position in detail. All of the "I"s have been  
5           dotted and all of the "T"s have been crossed  
6           to allow the Township to proceed seriously  
7           with any further discussions.

8                       MR. AURIEMMA: You are almost out of  
9           time.

10                      MR. PETERS: I have a couple more  
11           issues. Barring a miraculous breakthrough in  
12           the Township's decision, I agree with the  
13           majority of the BRAC supporters that it is  
14           time to take action and decide this  
15           longstanding problem. I am sure it will be a  
16           major step in the goal to keep Readington  
17           rural and the status it maintains.

18                      In addition, continuing on, further  
19           success in preserving open space will be an  
20           assurance that we will keep Readington rural,  
21           and that this can be done.

22                      MAYOR SHAMEY: We will go to the next  
23           row. Please queue up if there is anybody in  
24           this row. Anybody in the third row? Anybody

25

in the fourth row?

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1 MR. NONNI: My name is Robert Nonni,  
2 and I live at 3 Proprietary Lane in  
3 Whitehouse.

4 I have been a resident of Readington  
5 Township for 18 years. I am opposed to the  
6 approval of a bond ordinance to fund the  
7 purchase of Solberg Airport. I do not believe  
8 the Township Committee is exercising the will  
9 of the majority in improving the service. I  
10 have contacted the office of Funding at the  
11 FAA this week, and the Director of Aeronautics  
12 of the Department of Transportation and  
13 neither authority was able to report any  
14 applications, either pending or approved, for  
15 grants or funding by the owners of Solberg  
16 Airport.

17 The New Jersey Department of  
18 Transportation did report that a project of  
19 the recoating of the runway was being cost  
20 evaluated, but it has not been approved for  
21 funding. Should funding for the airport  
22 improvements be granted in the future,  
23 Readington Township's zoning review and site

24 plan requirements would be required before  
25 such work could commence. Our local

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1 government will postpone and deny any such  
2 transaction without the cost of appraisals,  
3 legal fees and without committing the Township  
4 to further debt. Readington Township is not,  
5 in my view, in clear and present danger of  
6 expansion being funded by the Federal  
7 Government.

8 I am not in favor of this show of  
9 force by our Township Committee. With regard  
10 to Township negotiations for the airport, both  
11 sides need to be convinced of the honesty.

12 The people no longer believe there is  
13 unanimity in not wanting the expansion. Even  
14 Solberg states, "We want to keep Solberg  
15 Airport a small community airport, and we are  
16 happy with the airport the way it is." Why  
17 then has this issue not been resolved? Both  
18 sides of these negotiations seem to be acting  
19 out of pride and stubbornness.

20 I believe the parties need a mediator  
21 so they can better hear each other and come to  
22 an understanding and rather than a profes-

23 sional mediator who has loyalty to whoever  
24 pays the bill, I am suggesting that a group of  
25 residents serve as mediators in further

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1 negotiations. These negotiations would be  
2 reported back to the residents. This is our  
3 town, and we now need to be more involved in  
4 this process. A group that we can trust must  
5 come down squarely in the middle of this issue  
6 with one agenda, love of Readington Township.  
7 Thank you very much.

8 MAYOR SHAMEY: Next row?

9 MR. KEEFE: Ladies and gentlemen, my  
10 name is Bill Keefe, K-E-E-F-E, I live in  
11 Readington Township.

12 By virtue of background, I have a 20-  
13 year career in banking with extensive  
14 experience in municipal finance. Just taking  
15 the numbers that Mr. Gatti had spoken to  
16 previously, I hardly think you people know how  
17 to spend money, with a \$22 million debt level.  
18 I deal with municipalities around the State  
19 and the debt level is hardly suffocating. In  
20 fact, I wish my debt level on my house was

21 only four percent of its value, so  
22 congratulations on that front.

23 As far as moving forward at this point  
24 in time, I understand that the Township brings  
25 in about \$6 million in annual tax revenue. If

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1 that does nothing but go with inflation, it  
2 will serve as (inaudible) on debt if we ever  
3 reach that, and I highly doubt that. So  
4 congratulations.

5 My parting comments are that I hope  
6 that the Township Committee can work  
7 productively with the Solbergs to an ending  
8 that serves Readington Township in the best  
9 way possible. Thank you very much.

10 MR. FARSIUO: My name is Abraham  
11 Farsiou, I live on Weavers Lane in Whitehouse  
12 Station.

13 You have been elected and re-elected  
14 by the people of Readington Township. I think  
15 you are doing a fantastic job for our  
16 township. We don't want this airport  
17 expanding to a jetport. But according to the  
18 pamphlet, I don't know why you are here  
19 tonight, because Solberg says that Solberg is

20 not planning any changes. Thank you very  
21 much.

22 MR. DUDZINSKI: Good evening, Ed  
23 Dudzinski, 5 Brier Road, Whitehouse Station.

24 I will repeat what I suggested at the  
25 last Township Committee meeting on the 17th.

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1 I very much would like to hear what Thor  
2 Solberg has to say. I think the public is  
3 desperate to hear what he has to say.

4 MAYOR SHAMEY: So would we.

5 MR. DUDZINSKI: I know Suzie Nagle and  
6 her husband Ed asked that this meeting be  
7 postponed, because they had a vacation planned

8 that they are on. I would again like to  
9 suggest that the Township Committee go the  
10 extra mile and try to schedule another  
11 meeting, not two weeks in advance notice, but

12 two months in advance notice to have the  
13 Solbergs invited to come and present their  
14 case directly to the people. The people are  
15 desperate to hear what they have to say,

16 directly. They are very confused. We are at  
17 the he said/she said point, and there are  
18 letters in the paper that are not serving any

19 good. We need to hear directly from them so  
20 we can understand both sides of the issue.  
21 The other thing, I agree whole-  
22 heartedly with what Mayor Shamey said, which  
23 is Readington for Readington. I think when  
24 any action is imposed, it should be put to a  
25 vote of the people, so that the people can

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1 decide. That is all I have to say.  
2 MR. DOMCI: My name is John Domci,  
3 D-O-M-C-I. I have been in this township for  
4 25 years. I have been basically silent. I had  
5 to work my butt off to support my family and  
6 take care of the taxes that have gone up from  
7 \$1,800 to over 10,000. Our roads are a  
8 shamble. There are no sewers, there is no  
9 municipal help from our municipality. You  
10 take the money and it goes directly into the  
11 municipal coffers. None of it is coming back  
12 to us in the signs of sewage, and if you had  
13 been in this township 25 years and you have a  
14 house for 25 years, be prepared. Your septic  
15 is ready to go. You will be looking at  
16 \$45,000. If it takes you five years to make

17 that money, it is \$9,000 on top of your taxes,  
18 and you will be spending that for this bond  
19 issue. This bond issue has got to be looked  
20 at, and it has got to be controlled and we  
21 need to take control of it.

22 They refer to the jetport and the  
23 jets, but what I understood, my neighbor came  
24 to me and said that there is going to be F47s  
25 to be flying into this airport. I said there

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1 are jets flying into this area now that are  
2 commercial. When they put the school on this  
3 property and on this runway, we were told --  
4 there was people up in arms about this school  
5 because of the runway. They said no, the  
6 airport is safe, it is a commercial addition  
7 to this community, and it is needed. Here is  
8 the school and we are more worried about our  
9 property values than the kids that are in here  
10 every day. That is all I have to say.

11 MR. BLAGBROUGH: My name is Al

12 Blagbrough, and I live at 79 Readington Road.

13 I would just like to say that you guys  
14 have a house divided, and everybody knows it.  
15 Your analogy about the bond, using a home

16 equity loan of \$22 million cap and you don't  
17 necessarily have to spend all of that, that is  
18 really not a good analogy, because you kind of  
19 own your home when you go get an equity loan,  
20 you don't quite own Solberg Airport yet. A  
21 better analogy would be that you were pre-  
22 approved for a mortgage of \$22 million. Now  
23 whether or not you spend that money and buy  
24 that house, that is up for grabs, but I have a  
25 hard time seeing why you need money to get the

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1 preapproved mortgage when the seller doesn't  
2 want to sell. That is my only comment. I see  
3 it, I have seen as much of it as I can. I am  
4 trying to read through the he said/she said  
5 letters, and it is a precursor to eminent  
6 domain. That is where I draw the line.  
7 I don't care how many issues are on  
8 both sides of the equation, because I think  
9 there is merit to both sides of the house.  
10 But eminent domain is wrong, and you guys  
11 should go on record as saying you will never  
12 do that. That is the end of my comment.

13 (Applause.)

14 MAYOR SHAMEY: Anybody else in this

15 gentleman's row? Okay. Would you please come  
16 up.

17 MS. MOSULINO: My name is Diane  
18 Mosulino.

19 Actually mine is a three-part  
20 question. I would like to know what happens  
21 if this purchase doesn't come to pass and what  
22 will happen with the money, the bond, and how  
23 much of the \$22 million will be used for non-  
24 purchase issues such as evaluations and  
25 assessments. If there is no purchase of the

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1 airport with this money then, inevitably, will  
2 this money be used for eminent domain and  
3 condemnation? My last question is why wasn't  
4 this bond issue put on a vote for referendum?  
5 Thank you.

6 MR. HELLINGS: My name is Steve  
7 Hellings, Old Highway 28. I have a couple of  
8 things.

9 You talked about cost per -- I never  
10 heard any cost, but the loss of ratables on  
11 open space, what the long-term loss of  
12 ratables would be. Now, the real important

13 thing is in two years, ten years, or 30 years,  
14 if there is technology like a computer chip,  
15 let's say, the government has an airplane that  
  
16 will fly like a helicopter and becomes a jet,  
17 will you still throw it out of there, even  
18 though you are limited to 3,700 feet? So you  
19 will still get jets. The issue I have, there  
  
20 are issues on my part of the town that no one  
21 will help me, people, we have pedophile motels  
22 sitting on Route 22. What about our property  
23 values? I want to know why I am supposed to  
  
24 pay for their lack of homes? How about a  
25 surcharge for the people that have to fight

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1 most financial rewards? All of the ones that  
2 voted for certain people that live over by the  
3 airport that are worried about their property  
  
4 values, not the betterment of Readington  
5 Township, only them. That is the me, myself  
6 and I type of individual that is in the  
7 corporate world. That is the problem with  
  
8 this country today. Thank you.

9 MR. SCLAFALI: Mike Sclafali, 18  
10 Beaver Lane.

11 I have lived here for 26 years, and I

12 don't know if I'm having a delusion, but about  
13 four years ago I was in a meeting with a  
14 couple of hundred residents in the County  
15 College where the DOT was trying to educate me  
  
16 and hundreds of others about the expansion  
17 plan that Solberg put in. So I don't agree  
18 that he is not planning on expanding. I have  
19 a problem with the literature he puts out  
  
20 saying he doesn't want any changes. That has  
21 no reliability to me.

22 The second thing is when he does  
23 expand, it will double and triple the numbers  
  
24 and the size of the planes. That is why you  
25 have this safety zone that everyone agrees

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1 will have to be put in place. Another name  
2 for that is metropolitan impact danger zone.  
3 I am not worried about me, personally, I am  
  
4 worried about the 400 kids in this school that  
5 are going to be right on the fringe of a  
6 danger zone, and they are going to be, years  
7 from now, worrying about the crash and a  
  
8 couple of kids that have died, and all these  
9 supporters of expansion of the airport will  
10 not be in this room when we are holding the

11 funeral. It is going to happen, because they  
12 are tripling the risk.

13 I support you, get this thing moving.  
14 (Applause.)

15 MR. COLE: Bob Cole, 120 Readington  
16 Road.

17 Mayor Shamey, could it be that some  
18 day every citizen in Readington is able to  
19 look back on this struggle, this time in our  
20 community, this wrestling with what is right  
21 and what is wrong and recognize above any yet  
22 to be determined resolution your uncommon  
23 leadership? You and I were both there in  
24 Readington Middle School gym, in September of  
25 2001, with people on both sides of the issue.

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1 They sat nervously, if not agitated, while the  
2 other side spewed rhetoric. And five years  
3 later with the Committee intact, here we are  
4 still not better, maybe worse.

5 There are many who would shrink from  
6 such responsibility, and clearly other  
7 officials do not have the talent to guide such  
8 divergent stakeholders to a fair and equitable

9 resolution. Yet I am here to express my  
10 confidence in you, personally.

11 I appeal to you, knowing full well  
12 there are others on your Committee who have  
13 passed the point of no return a long time ago.  
14 And while these people will continue to  
15 polarize the issue, I believe you have the  
16 ability to center it.

17 I am here tonight to urge you to avoid  
18 passing this ordinance and continue seeking  
19 common ground on this issue with the Solberg  
20 family. Funding at this point in time is  
21 clearly not the issue. Theoretically  
22 speaking, it seems the Committee could set  
23 aside all the money in the world, but how does  
24 it make it possible to buy property that is  
25 simply not for sale. Your actions here

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1 tonight will not inspire negotiations, it will  
2 further incite bad feelings and destroy trust.  
3 Trust has yet to be established. It takes a  
4 lot to get past abusive patterns of behavior  
5 on both sides.

6 I would be terribly displeased to find  
7 out three months from now that this action

8 that you take potentially tonight was really  
9 the condemnation train leaving the station.  
10 Obviously, tempers have flared recently, but  
11 it is time to get back to the table. Stop  
12 hiring eminent domain experts.

13 I attended the meeting last month and  
14 found it informative. I was aware this past  
15 August when you set up the time for the  
16 meetings. As the great, great grandson of the  
17 village doctor, Dr. Johnson, and the grandson  
18 of two hard working farmers, I ask you as the  
19 Committee to be financially responsible. My  
20 family began in the spirit of this town and  
21 uses lessons learned to improve the future.  
22 The common text of our small Readington  
23 village is important to me. There is no place  
24 for noisy jets and yet today I remain more  
25 threatened by the stream of vehicles on our

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1 roads going through the village than by the  
2 runway on its outskirts. I am worried about  
3 my tax bill, and your being trumped by some  
4 authority in the future.

5 To change the personnel on your  
6 negotiating team might be appropriate, and get

7 professionals, establish a new time line and  
8 get back to the table. I urge Thor, Lorraine  
9 and Suzie to come back to the table as well.

10 MR. AURIEMMA: You have to wrap it up.

11 MR. COLE: Thank you for your leader-  
12 ship. To be remembered you need tolerance,  
13 honesty, commitment and a willingness to carve  
14 your own path, despite the opinions of your  
15 colleagues. May you lead onward.

16 MR. BOLGER: Good evening. My name is  
17 Bolger, B-O-L-G-E-R.

18 I have been in the Township for 30  
19 years. I know all you people personally, and  
20 you have the highest integrity of people I  
21 know. You have done everything you can to  
22 protect this township. Let's talk about the  
23 people like me who are not a member of any  
24 organized group, just a poor homeowner who is  
25 up here scared to death that we are going to

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1 have a jetport. I am a native of New Jersey,  
2 I've seen the results of poor planning. I  
3 have seen whole towns go down the tubes. Just  
4 go up to Teterboro, go up to Morristown.

5 All these people are talking about the  
6 loss of 55 or \$60 a month in taxes. They have  
7 no idea of the catastrophic effect a jetport  
8 will have on this township. You save six to  
9 \$7,000, so what, that will be polluted by  
10 jets.

11 Are we serous? I think people ought  
12 to educate themselves. When we had the 1983  
13 Airport Safety Act, which has not happened at  
14 this point -- I think Mayor Shamey may have  
15 brought this up -- but in that Act it said  
16 that all non-conforming properties, but it is  
17 now conforming when it comes to this airport.  
18 That means that it is now commercial property.

19 They can do anything they want. When  
20 the Solbergs applied for the leader status in  
21 the application, they said on the question of  
22 is there any local opposition, they said not  
23 much, when we were up there screaming and  
24 yelling. You received petitions with 3,800  
25 signatures from my good friend Ted about the

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1 people who don't want this. I think you  
2 should move forward. I think you should  
3 approve it and acquire it once and for all.

4 We have been at this negotiation for about  
5 three or four and a half years now, and it is  
6 not going anywhere. It won't go anywhere. I  
7 told you that privately, and I will tell you  
8 publicly, and I said it at the time.

9 This is just a big joke, okay, and  
10 maybe it is done to drive the price up. I  
11 don't know, but do we really want to destroy  
12 this township? That is what is at stake.  
13 This township will be destroyed if that  
14 becomes a jetport with the list of stuff that  
15 they have on that presentation that you made,  
16 the 5,000 foot runway. Nobody has talked  
17 about the weight-carrying capacity. Nobody  
18 has talked about the weight capacity of that  
19 runway, which will be 60,000 pounds. What  
20 kind of a plane can you land on a 60,000 pound  
21 weight capacity, 5,000 feet long? You better  
22 do it now, folks. If you want to support the  
23 township then support these good folks.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. SMITH: My name is William Smith,

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1 and I live on County Line Road.

2 To understand the impact of the

3 Solberg proposal, to me the answer lies  
4 largely in the numbers. Expansion of the  
5 airport would have a massive impact on  
6 property values, damage to quality of life.  
7 The Committee is proposing a \$22 million bond  
8 to purchase this property. This number is a  
9 tiny fraction, by any measure, to maintain our  
10 quality of life. This is our only solution,  
11 it seems.

12 One thing is when the bond is paid  
13 off, the Township owns a valuable resource  
14 owned by the residents. Second, there is a  
15 good possibility these costs could be defrayed  
16 from other sources of funding, open space and  
17 preservation, and others may exist that the  
18 expansion of the airport will cost the  
19 Township in perpetuity. Residents, I urge you  
20 not to be swayed by the out-of-date political  
21 action committee. They use campaign finance  
22 laws to hide both the true agenda and the  
23 names of the parties against it.

24 Certainly, some people think this is  
25 the way to buy a township. I commend the

1 Committee for its dedication, perseverance,  
2 civility and the integrity they have displayed  
3 in the handling of this matter. It has not  
4 been easy. They have my gratitude, respect  
5 and my thanks.

6 In conclusion, let me reiterate that I  
7 fully support the Committee on the bond  
8 proposal, and I urge other township residents  
9 to do the same. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. JENKIN: My name is Karen Jenkin.

12 I have an example of a letter that was  
13 written to Mayor Shamey and Mr. Solberg in  
14 regards to the airport, and I thought the  
15 audience would be interested in hearing it.

16 This person could not attend. It was written  
17 by Peter A. Sommers, okay. I did not write  
18 this, this was his, so I am quoting word for  
19 word what is in this letter.

20 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is he a resident?

21 MS. JENKIN: Yes, he is a resident of  
22 Readington Township. I can't remember the  
23 name of the road, off of Barley Sheaf. It  
24 says, "Dear Sir, I have been a taxpaying  
25 resident of Readington Township since 1977. I

1 am adamantly opposed to the Township's  
2 involvement in attempting to acquire by  
3 condemnation, or otherwise, the property known  
4 as Solberg Airport. This private property has  
5 been in existence as an airport longer than I  
6 and probably you have been a resident.

7 "If the Solbergs wish to expand, with  
8 this effort they most certainly would need  
9 great national, State and local approvals.  
10 Beyond that, the airport property is their  
11 property, and as long as they abide by all  
12 applicable land use laws, they should be  
13 permitted to do with it what is allowed.

14 "A month or so ago I wrote my tax  
15 check and noticed my 1998 final tax bill  
16 statement. In 1998, my final tax bill was  
17 \$6,849. For 2005, my final tax bill was  
18 \$10,788. My taxes have increased 57 percent  
19 in seven years, or an average tax increase of  
20 8.2 percent per year, almost a thousand  
21 dollars. This, obviously, far exceeds the  
22 cost of living during the same time period. I  
23 did not move, I still live in the same house.  
24 I don't recall any increase in municipal  
25 services. In my opinion, the Readington

1 Township officials should be concentrating on  
2 ways to improve services and limit tax  
3 increases, not trying to buy development  
4 rights to properties of private citizens or  
5 businesses." It is signed Peter A. Sommers.

6 Now, the reason I read this --  
7 (Applause.)

8 MS. JENKIN: A lot of these letters  
9 have been sent to Mr. Shamey, both that way  
10 and the other way with people who want the  
11 Township to acquire the Solberg property. Are  
12 these letters available in the township  
13 building so we can read them?

14 MAYOR SHAMEY: Letters from residents  
15 to the Mayor?

16 MS. JENKIN: To you or anybody. Is  
17 that public documents?

18 MAYOR SHAMEY: I believe so.

19 MR. GATTI: They are supposed to be  
20 available when you go in.

21 MR. AURIEMMA: You're not supposed to  
22 answer questions.

23 MS. JENKIN: If they are available,  
24 can it put up where they can be read?

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: I will address that

1 after the public comment.

2 MS. JENKIN: Okay. My last comment  
3 here tonight is that I think this bond thing  
4 should be put up for a vote. That should not  
5 be put in the hands of five people sitting in  
6 front of us. Thank you.

7 MR. ZWERLING: Eric Zwerling, I live  
8 here in Readington.

9 Allowing the Solberg family and the  
10 residents of Readington to enjoy our present  
11 lifestyles, considering everything, there  
12 should be no illusions for anyone anymore. If  
13 the Solbergs are left up to their own designs,  
14 Solberg Airport will eventually become a  
15 jetport industrial park, and that is  
16 absolutely certain.

17 Turning this property into a jetport  
18 industrial park will have impact on thousands  
19 of residents spread over several square miles.

20 No other property owner in Readington holds so  
21 much power over so many people to seriously  
22 impair their quality of life.

23 And make no mistake, a massive  
24 unregulated noise source, such as a jetport,  
25 would do exactly that. As Director of the

1 Rutgers University Noise Technical Assistance  
2 Center, I have visited neighborhoods and  
3 communities across the United States that have  
4 been devastated by just such a noise source.  
5 I have looked into crying eyes and listened to  
6 voices trembling with anger and desperation.  
7 People who, it is fair to say, have had their  
8 lives and properties destroyed to some  
9 measure.

10 We have repeatedly been asked by Thor  
11 Solberg to trust his intentions, that he would  
12 never do anything to harm his Readington,  
13 where he was born and lives. I would love to  
14 believe that, like a kindly grandfather, he is  
15 only interested in what is best for us, and  
16 has the purest of intentions. But  
17 unfortunately, and it pains me to say this  
18 about anybody, he has repeatedly revealed  
19 himself to be completely untrustworthy, and  
20 is, in fact, a master of deception and  
21 distortion.

22 In this matter, he has told the truth  
23 only two times, during the negotiations. He  
24 plans to expand the airport into a jetport,

25 and he will spend whatever it takes to buy

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1 seats on the Township Committee. Characteris-  
2 tically, however, he denies these statements  
3 to the press. His covert and overt efforts to  
4 buy a more compliant Township Committee not  
5 only don't instill trust, they instill fear.  
6 He freely admits that his negotiations with  
7 the NJ DOT were nothing more than a two-year  
8 delay tactic. This certainly does not instill  
9 trust. His purposefully deceptive and biased  
10 push polls ringing Readington phones, once  
11 again, do anything but instill trust. It  
12 certainly does not instill trust that he chose  
13 Lawrence Berger for his partner/negotiator,  
14 considering that Berger has already been  
15 sharply censured and rebuked for his bad faith  
16 dealings by at least three different courts so  
17 far, and is not content to contain his bad  
18 faith dealings to the courtroom. Mr. Berger  
19 has threatened several Readington Township  
20 Committee members. This last fact should  
21 shock, sicken and enrage Readington residents.  
22 And finally, the fact that Thor says I would  
23 never harm Readington, that is a farce. Thor

24 Solberg is, in fact, a Florida resident that  
25 hasn't voted in New Jersey for a decade is

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1 final confirmation that he has not been  
2 telling the truth. At this point, the only  
3 thing I trust about Thor Solberg is that his  
4 only interest is the self-interest of  
5 maximizing his profits from this property  
6 without any regard for the impacts it will  
7 have on our home town or its individuals. I  
8 also trust that Thor Solberg will stop at  
9 virtually nothing in his quest to evolve his  
10 airport into a regional jetport.

11 In stark contrast, I trust the  
12 Township Committee to act on my behalf to  
13 protect me, my family and my property from a  
14 clear and present and credible danger while  
15 fairly offering the Solbergs appropriate, but  
16 not inflated, compensation.

17 Every single member of this Committee  
18 was elected on the platform that they would  
19 protect Readington's uniquely rural character.  
20 The impossible and remarkable write-in victory  
21 of Julia Allen was a crystal clear affirmation

22 that this platform represents the majority  
23 view of Readington residents.

24 The Committee honors us with their  
25 commitment to the real interests of the

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1 community, which we salute and deeply  
2 appreciate. If the Solbergs truly cared about  
3 Readington, they would accept the Township's  
4 offer, which would make them multi-  
5 millionaires and leave them with the current  
6 airport to operate into perpetuity, while  
7 sparing all the rest of us the obnoxious  
8 droning of jets overhead, the smell of jet  
9 fuel fumes and increased traffic all over  
10 Readington. However, since this would require  
11 reason and consideration, it will not happen,  
12 and the Committee must do whatever is  
13 necessary to protect us. The Committee's  
14 choices here are difficult and courageous,  
15 traits that I deeply respect and which are  
16 rarely present in politicians. They sit  
17 before us ready to resolve this issue for once  
18 and for all, now, rather than defer it to the  
19 future. I thank the Committee members very  
20 much for your steely determination in

21 resolving this matter.

22 MAYOR SHAMEY: Next?

23 MR. SHEPHARD: My name is George

24 Shephard, S-H-E-P-H-A-R-D, and I live at 95

25 Cole Road.

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1 That is a tough act to follow. I  
2 don't have any prepared speech, but I promise  
3 I will be less than two minutes.

4 I think the time to act is now.  
5 Sometimes in the process of negotiations, it  
6 is necessary to get to a point of strength.  
7 Perhaps this will be a point of strength that  
8 will force the Solbergs to finally tell the  
9 truth. I was watching Mr. Solberg in the back  
10 of the room as the gentleman before me spoke.  
11 He sat there shaking his head with some kind  
12 of grin on his face. This is the time to  
13 speak. You are here, and I would like to  
14 reiterate Mr. Auriemma's call for you to come  
15 down here and tell us the truth. If you don't  
16 plan on expanding your airport, you can tell  
17 us that tonight. You can enter into an  
18 agreement with the Township Committee and this  
19 can be over. Thank you very much.

20 MS. SOHL: Susan Sohl, I live on  
21 Solberg Road.

22 At the November 11th election, the  
23 Readington Township voters indicated their  
24 support with the biggest turnout we had in  
25 years, probably the most important issue then

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1 and now is the airport. So a vote for the  
2 Committee was a vote for acquisition of the  
3 airport. Plain and simple. When a homeowner  
4 wants to improve his or her property or pave  
5 the driveway, it enhances the value of the  
6 home and improves the aesthetic value of the  
7 neighborhood. There is no negative effect on  
8 the surrounding homes. When the airport wants  
9 to improve or pave its property, it affects  
10 the value of the surrounding homes and the  
11 quality of life of everyone in the Township.  
12 Proponents of the expansion do not seem to  
13 know the difference.

14 If we could believe what the Solbergs  
15 tell us, this issue would have been settled  
16 long, long ago. I can't remember how many  
17 times Thor told us point blank no jets. Then

18 he said he couldn't control what kind of  
19 aircraft would land there, as long as runways  
20 would support it. I know he can't deny usage  
21 of the airport, that the runways can take, so  
22 why does he try to appease us with lies? We  
23 are way past being appeased, most everyone in  
24 the township knows the facts. People have  
25 researched the statistics, they researched the

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1 laws and the runways' capabilities. They are  
2 not dealing with a naive public any longer.  
3 The Township Committee, thank you for your  
4 unwavering dedication. Please continue to  
5 work as you are the people elected here, you  
6 know you have our support. Thank you.

7 MS. SCHULZE: Diane Schulze, 14

8 Solberg Road.

9 It has now been over 20 years that  
10 this airport has held the Township's residents  
11 hostage with a threat of expansion. This  
12 airport does have a history, it is one of  
13 deception. This deception began in 1986, when  
14 they applied for reliever status and signed a  
15 legal document stating there were no  
16 objections to this proposal. From there it

17 went to expanding only for safety issues,  
18 which I can accept, but that was not the real  
19 scenario. That sounded good for the public to  
20 hear.

21 Mr. Solberg stood at this podium and  
22 said no jets. He stated again he had no  
23 control over what took off and what landed,  
24 but always stated how he would do nothing to  
25 change the atmosphere of the township.

96

1 Then the runway was to be paved to a  
2 mere 3,000 plus feet for safety. I could go  
3 on about conflicting documents, the  
4 statements, but there is not enough time. The  
5 last issue that shows the arrogance of the  
6 owners was the article in the paper by Mr.  
7 Solberg where he promises not to allow noisy  
8 jets. I suppose that means he will only allow  
9 quiet jets. Definitely an oxymoron, and to  
10 change the runways to impact as few homes as  
11 possible.

12 What about safety: What about safety  
13 for the schools, to the homes and to the  
14 properties and to the parks? How is this  
15 possible when he stated he has no control over

16 what lands and what takes off?

17 If the airport negatively impacts one  
18 person's property, it is one too many. What  
19 gives a private business owner the right to  
20 impact anybody's home? With the planes  
21 getting larger, there are larger safety zones,  
22 clearly, and drastically it devalues the  
23 property. Will the airport owners reimburse  
24 all of the property owners affected by this  
25 expansion? I doubt it.

97

1 There are individuals who say it is  
2 wrong for the Township to take the airport by  
3 eminent domain, but does that mean the airport  
4 has the right to take others' properties or to  
5 devalue their homes?

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. SCHULZE: That is exactly what  
8 happened when the Allentown Airport expanded,  
9 and they will do it to us. An expansion of  
10 this magnitude that the owners are proposing  
11 will subject the residents of this community  
12 to larger aircraft, noise and safety issues.  
13 We will have aircrafts fly over our schools

14 and parks on expansion for more than safety.  
15 This expansion will change the rural area  
16 forever.

17 You are our elected officials, and we  
18 are putting our wellbeing in your hands. We  
19 ask you to protect our children, our families,  
20 our homes, and make your decision. I see no  
21 other way than eminent domain, if Solberg  
22 Corporation will not desist in its expansion  
23 plans and remain at status quo. This has been  
24 going on far too long, it is time to stop it.

25 MR. ROTH: My name is Andy Roth, and I

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1 live at 615 Route 523 South.

2 Some of the comments I wanted to make  
3 are addressed to Mr. Solberg, but also they  
4 have bearing on the Committee. I do have some  
5 questions for the Committee. The concern was  
6 just raised, what right does the Government  
7 have? Mr. Solberg has a concern about abuse  
8 of government power, and that is the issue I  
9 wanted to bring up at the public forum.

10 I wanted to bring up some principles  
11 that are mentioned in the Bible regarding  
12 government power and regarding private

13 property. There are two sections of the Bible  
14 that I wanted to mention. One is in Chapter  
15 22, Verse 8, (inaudible), and in that it says  
  
16 when you build a house or a roof on your  
17 house, you are building a parapet on the law,  
18 and they lived in a society at that time where  
19 somebody could fall off the roof and you could  
  
20 say nobody will tell me what to do with my  
21 property, because somebody could walk over and  
22 fall off.

23 Now, is Mr. Solberg saying on the  
  
24 other hand, government is taking too much  
25 control? It is Verse (inaudible), Chapter 21

99

1 where King Ahab sought (inaudible) and said,  
2 "I will not sell my vineyard, God forbid I  
3 sell the inheritance of my father, even though  
4 they had the price to compensate." In that  
5 particular case, the King actually had to cull  
6 through false deceit. Is that what we are  
7 saying here? Or is Mr. Solberg? Is the  
  
8 Government saying we are not trying to come in  
9 and take over your property because of greed,  
10 but what you are doing is causing an impact on  
11 the people, and this is the only way it can be

12 done? I guess I am interested to know in  
13 eminent domain some of the legal parts of that  
14 can be addressed and what are the precedents  
15 for using it in this capacity in order to  
16 protect all of us in the community when one  
17 person is going beyond and saying, "I will do  
18 what I want with my property, even if it  
19 affects others."

20 You finally have to take it a step  
21 further. What is the legal and ethical  
22 precedence for using it.

23 MR. DARGIS: Tony Dargis, 126

24 Hillcrest Road.

25 I would just like to maybe address the

100

1 issue of the tax increases that will come with  
2 this bond ordinance. I would like to look at  
3 this more as an investment. We invest an  
4 awful lot of money in schools such as this, to  
5 the order of 20 or \$25 million a year, to  
6 build a school like this. I think it is a  
7 very small investment to keep our environment,  
8 to keep our township rule and to keep a lot of  
9 additional traffic from coming into our

10

township.

11

The numbers here are really very

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compelling. I mean, if you look and say that

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this will cost us an additional \$200 a year,

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well that is a lot of money, and I really

15

wouldn't want to pay that. But if I look, if

16

my property value goes down by five or ten

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percent, I am talking about a 30 to \$40,000

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loss. So I see this \$2,000 for ten years as a

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great investment. I would urge the Committee

20

to pass this bond ordinance and to save our

21

township and keep it the way it is. Thank you

22

very much.

23

(Applause.)

24

MR. FORNER: My name is Robert Forner,

25

and I live in Whitehouse, and I've lived there

101

1

for 30 years or since 1930, I'm sorry.

2

I have seen farms where the farmers

3

had to work their butts off to maintain it and

4

raise their families, and other people come

5

along and just take advantage of this farmland

6

preservation and live like kings and queens.

7

But as far as this airport goes, Mr. Shamey

8

read a letter from the Chancellor of the

9 Schools about putting this school in this  
10 position, but he probably didn't say how. He  
11 said that you were going to take over the  
12 airport so it couldn't increase. But you  
13 already owned property over in East  
14 Whitehouse, which was bought back in the '70s  
15 to put a school, but they couldn't put it  
16 there because of no sewerage.

17 So when the sewers went through, they  
18 never used that land for anything else. What  
19 happens to the tax dollars that you do not  
20 collect from this school, from this airport  
21 when you take it over? You people talk about  
22 the profits and the losses, what happens to  
23 all these tax dollars that are not going to  
24 come into the Township along with the others?  
25 Who is going to benefit most likely by the

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1 whole project, rather than the people of  
2 Readington Township?

3 There has to be other ways of  
4 benefitting, too, and that is what I am asking  
5 you people, who will really benefit by this  
6 take over of the airport? Not the people of  
7 the Township, they are going to lose all the

8 way around. If we ever had a depression, who  
9 will pay for their taxes? Thank you.

10 MR. GOODWIN: I am Bill Goodwin. I  
11 want to make a few points.

12 The first one is the distinction  
13 between an airport used for recreational  
14 purposes and an airport used for public  
15 transportation. By public transportation, it  
16 would include commuter flights, corporate  
17 flights, corporate traffic, business freight  
18 traffic, as opposed to a recreational airport  
19 used strictly for small aircraft.

20 The second point I would like to make  
21 is for those airport transportations, they are  
22 generally owned by the public. Lodging for  
23 the airport guests, they will be owned by the  
24 public.

25 The third point I would like to make

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1 is that the Solbergs have consistently sought  
2 to expand, to make the airport into a larger  
3 public-type transportation airport, which  
4 means that at some point the Township was  
5 going to have another public body forced to

6 run the airport, if it is publicly owned,  
7 because of the problems they cause. If there  
8 are multiple problems around the community,  
9 problems with the neighborhood noise and so  
10 forth, and in order to balance these  
11 properties with public interest, it enjoys  
12 public ownership.

13 Another point I would like to make is  
14 the Solbergs have to expand Solberg Airport.  
15 They entered into an agreement with the State  
16 that they will voluntarily agree that they  
17 will enter into negotiations to sell their  
18 airport.

19 Putting these things together, at some  
20 point the Township will have to buy the  
21 airport, so you can buy it now at whatever  
22 price it would be, or you can buy it later  
23 after it expands and it becomes a large public  
24 nuisance.

25 If you buy it later, it will be

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1 impossible. The Township has a choice, you  
2 could buy it now at whatever price that would  
3 be, or buy it later at some future time after  
4 expansion where you will be paying possibly

5 double the price. Thank you.

6 MR. OELIO: John Oelio. I've lived in  
7 Readington Township since 1984. I moved here  
8 from North Plainfield. I grew up in  
9 Plainfield and it seems like a lot of these  
10 issues is complicated, because they are also  
11 pretty simple. I think most of the people  
12 here are from towns like Linden and Rahway and  
13 Elizabeth, and they came here to get a little  
14 piece of heaven. I have my little acre and  
15 three-quarters of heaven, and I have been  
16 involved in these meetings, because I don't  
17 want to get polluted. I believe we will get  
18 polluted if jets come in.

19 I am in favor of the bond issue. I am  
20 not in favor of having a mediator. This is  
21 Readington's business. I went out, I knocked  
22 door to door, and people do not want jets.  
23 They are not stupid, they understand what is  
24 going to happen. The inconsistencies in Mr.  
25 Solberg's literature are laughable, they're

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1 embarrassing to me. This is in the newspaper,  
2 as to what he wants, what we want and he  
3 writes a letter saying he doesn't want to

4 change the airport. People say well, we have  
5 inconsistencies. I have been looking at this  
6 in an unbiased sight, and I don't see  
7 inconsistencies on our part, I am not a brain  
8 surgeon. When it comes to the political  
9 issues of what to use to bring this to a head,  
10 where there is some viable negotiations,  
11 because if you think about this for a minute,  
12 the simplicity of it is that if you own land,  
13 you will stall as long as you can, and that  
14 will drive the property values up.

15 So listen, the bond ordinance, I  
16 believe it should pass. I believe it is a  
17 great thing. The Committee has done a great  
18 thing for Readington Township, and I hope you  
19 all continue.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. AIMOVITCH: Frank Aimovitch, I  
22 have been following this for the last ten  
23 years, and I find the most inconsistent  
24 statements by Mr. Thor Solberg, and it is  
25 unbelievable. Anyway, I will not go back over

1 the last ten years, but I received this

2 letter, as everyone else did, on February  
3 16th, 2006. I would like to read the last  
4 paragraph, the last couple of sentences. "In  
5 closing, I want to assure you that any future  
6 plans will include working closely with our  
7 neighbors." I would like to underline this  
8 statement, "We are happy with the airport the  
9 way it is, and believe that having a Balloon  
10 Festival, youth tours and open houses has  
11 helped enhance the quality of life we have all  
12 enjoyed. I hope you all agree. Thank you."

13 I see it is signed by Mr. Thor  
14 Solberg. I don't know how many of you went to  
15 Raritan Valley College, I don't remember  
16 whether it was six or seven years ago when Mr.  
17 Thor Solberg unfolded his huge plan to expand  
18 this airport. I do remember Leonard Lance,  
19 the FAA, the Department of Transportation and  
20 many jet people, the other members were there,  
21 and Mr. Solberg was there. I am wondering how  
22 he can make a statement now that he is happy  
23 with the way the airport is, and six or seven  
24 years ago, unfold this master plan before  
25 Readington Township. I guess, I don't know if

1 it was for the FAA with the maps on the wall,  
2 the scale, the architectural drawings of the  
3 length of the runways, the turnoffs, the 150-  
4 foot runway widths and taxi lanes. What was  
5 all that about? For somebody that doesn't  
6 really want to expand an airport and likes it  
7 the way it is, it seems that this gentleman  
8 contradicts himself with everything he says.  
9 But that is only my opinion.

10 I will leave the opinion up to you,  
11 but I hear a lot of people talking about all  
12 kinds of things. I don't know, I hope I am  
13 not insulting anyone, but I don't think  
14 anyone who followed this for any great length  
15 of time, I wish you would probably have had  
16 done this, and you will see what really  
17 transpired. But anyway, in closing, I leave  
18 everything up to you. This is a quality of  
19 life issue. It is not how much money you pay  
20 in taxes, taxes are going up every day. They  
21 are going up everywhere. It is strictly, once  
22 again, quality of life and nothing else.

23 You want an airport, you want jets,  
24 noise, you want more traffic, it is up to the  
25 individual to make the decision.

1 I support the Board 100 percent to get  
2 to the bottom of the situation. It has been  
3 going on far too long with Mr. Solberg.

4 Just to close, I have been in aviation  
5 for 46 years, and I see what airports do to  
6 communities, and you could all do your  
7 homework, just go on the internet and look up  
8 airports. Thank you very much.

9 MR. PONTEZORBO: My name is Steve  
10 Pontezorbo, and it is difficult to cover  
11 topics that haven't been covered, but I will  
12 say two general comments. I have attended as  
13 many of these meetings as possible and, to  
14 date, I have yet to hear any suggestion that  
15 is better than the bond ordinance. So I  
16 suggest, respectfully, anyone that states they  
17 oppose it, you have an alternative or solution  
18 in its place, and not doing so is not  
19 productive for anybody here this evening. The  
20 answer is not to wait until expansion is  
21 imminent, that will be too late at that point,  
22 and that is not to suggest that I don't think  
23 expansion is imminent. To those who say the  
24 property is not for sale, Solberg said so,  
25 there are many issues to date. They say one

1 thing and they act differently. In this case,  
2 entering into negotiations in which they  
3 suggest millions of dollars for land that is  
4 supposedly not for sale.

5 The second point is not only am I in  
6 favor of the bond ordinance, and this is not  
7 to suggest I don't think it would be valid or  
8 just to do so, but I would be willing to pay  
9 taxes on twice that amount. I would rather  
10 pay higher taxes on an expensive house than  
11 lower taxes on an inexpensive house. That is  
12 not to suggest that the taxes will go up with  
13 the airport expansion or housing, because I  
14 believe they will. As the gentleman just  
15 previously stated, taxes go up. I would  
16 rather pay higher taxes on an expensive house  
17 than lower taxes on an inexpensive house. I  
18 have no reason to believe that the Solbergs  
19 will not expand the airport. I have no reason  
20 to believe that will not happen.

21 MAYOR SHAMEY: Next?

22 MR. KRAUSE: My name is Dan Krause,  
23 Stoneybridge Stables, One Brook Tree Road,  
24 Whitehouse Station.

25 Ladies and gentlemen, I am not worried

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1 about the airport runway expansion, I am not  
2 worried about our property values decreasing.  
3 In fact, I am scared to death. Everything  
4 that everyone in here has worked so hard to  
5 begin will be lost. I applaud your efforts  
6 and everything you to do to stop this  
7 expansion. Thank you.

8 MRS. BELLEK: I am Lisa Bellek, and  
9 you will see my street on the map in front of  
10 you.

11 First of all, I think it is sad, I  
12 know this Committee has tried to educate the  
13 community on taxes. The majority of our taxes  
14 goes to our school system, and I am happy to  
15 say that my two and four year olds should  
16 hopefully some day attend these schools,  
17 because they are highly rated. So for those  
18 of you who are concerned about taxes, I urge  
19 you to go to Bridgewater, go to Flemington, go  
20 someplace else. By the way, their taxes in  
21 those places are even higher than ours.

22 I don't believe if I was to inflate  
23 ten big balloons, hot air balloons, that this  
24 Township would allow me to do that. If I was  
25 to do that, the Solbergs could not land or

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1 take off jets. I happen to be at the end of  
2 their runway. They would have to use a  
3 different runway that crosses in front of the  
4 school. So I urge this Committee, please end  
5 this. I have lived here 11 years, I love  
6 this town, I love what this town stands for.  
7 I just want this over with. It has just been  
8 dragging on too long, and it is costing us  
9 more money in the long run. Let's end it, get  
10 it over with and move on and maybe then we can  
11 handle some of the motel problems that we have  
12 on Route 22. Thank you.

13 MR. KALINICH: John Kalinich, I live  
14 on Rockford Lane, which is also on the map,  
15 unfortunately, mislabeled. I am in the way of  
16 the flight path. I lived here for 20 years.  
17 I came here in 1985, years before the FAA  
18 passed any ability for a private airport  
19 owner, like the Solbergs, to be able to be  
20 grandfathered in. That didn't happen until  
21 many years later, after Mr. Solberg lobbied  
22 Congress.

23 We talked about other scenarios

24 tonight, one that had to do with the bonding  
25 that you are trying to do to help negotiate an

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1 agreement with the Solbergs, and the other has  
2 to do with a significant and dramatic airport  
3 expansion. The Solbergs are in a win/win  
4 situation. They can accept a generous offer  
5 that the Township might be able to make based  
6 on the bonding for the \$22 million, and that  
7 would be a significant gain for them.

8 Alternatively, they can accept a similar  
9 amount of money in FAA grants. The estimate  
10 was \$21 million for the expansion back in  
11 1997, which expanded their airport  
12 significantly.

13 The second alternative, though, would  
14 cost the residents dearly. The inverse  
15 condemnation that the Solbergs will be  
16 imposing upon the property owners of  
17 Readington Township, where they will not be  
18 compensated, is intolerable. Either way, the  
19 Solbergs could win, or one way the remaining  
20 citizens will lose, big time. Let's move  
21 ahead to a final resolution of this issue.  
22 Thank you.

23 MRS. JAUNARAJAJS: My name is Michelle

24 Jaunarajs, and my husband and I own a house at  
25 101 Polaski Road, just outside of the yellow

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1 area on the piece of paper we all see. I was  
2 looking at whether or not our property  
3 bordered Lightfield Road.

4 I have heard lots of stuff said before  
5 and in the interest of time I will try not to  
6 reiterate what was said before. One small  
7 fact that struck me in looking at the  
8 literature is the hangar size. I want to zero  
9 in on that for a minute. Everybody says we  
10 will have bigger and bigger and heavier jets  
11 and noisier jets. If the jetport goes in,  
12 that is. Well, we are talking about a hangar  
13 size increase of Mr. Solberg and his family,  
14 they would like to increase it from 30,000  
15 square feet to 500,000 square feet, if I am  
16 reading that right. I don't need to do the  
17 math in my head, but the Township is willing  
18 to go from 30,000 square feet to 150,000  
19 square feet, which is a considerable increase.  
20 Now we are talking 500,000. It doesn't have  
21 to mean bigger and noisier and louder jets, it

22 could mean lots and lots and lots of smaller  
23 planes, which means lots and lots and lots  
24 more lights over my house every day somehow or  
25 other.

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1 I just don't understand how we can be  
2 spoon-fed information that there will not be  
3 an increase in noise, an increase in safety  
4 concerns, an increase in pollution concerns.  
5 The increase will support traffic of  
6 people coming and going. Some of this may be  
7 office space, some of it may be a lovely  
8 restaurant, and that would be wonderful, but  
9 to go from 30,000 square feet to 500,000  
10 square feet and say it will not have an impact  
11 on the property value on my home, I am just  
12 lost. I can't believe this. I believe  
13 everybody would love to look back at our  
14 neighbors, the Solberg family and ask humbly  
15 if they would speak with us, and if not this  
16 evening, at the next meeting, because in  
17 speaking with each of them personally, both  
18 Lorraine, Suzie and Mr. Solberg, I found them  
19 to be very personable on a human level, on a

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neighborly level.

We live down the road from each other, we should be able to talk to each other. But I really, really think if we can get up here a little more often, rather than always have prepared statements in the newspaper that

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people will thrash over for hours and hours of microphone, I would really like to hear from the Solbergs in these proceedings. I commend the Township Committee for making every effort to have these public hearings, but I think we need to go an inch and a half further and try to be sure that the Solberg Aviation family is represented, and also present here to speak to us, too. That is in the interest of negotiating things. I certainly would like to hear from them.

I certainly would not want to see my property values go down, I can't afford another nickel in taxes, but I am up against a wall right now. I also don't want to have the value of my house go down. So I would like to hear some more negotiating going on, as opposed to jumping into eminent domain. I

19 would hate to see my house taken away because  
20 someone wants to put up a parking lot for the  
21 ball park across the street. I would like to  
22 see negotiations carried on. Thank you very  
23 much.

24 MAYOR SHAMEY: All the way in the back  
25 of the room, is there anybody else, please

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1 come forward.

2 MRS. POTENTA: Mary Potenta. I wasn't  
3 going to say anything, but I have lived here a  
4 long time, over 25 years, and I think you have  
5 done a great job as representing me. But I am  
6 afraid, I see the anger on people's faces in  
7 this room and it makes me afraid. I have  
8 never been afraid before. I am almost afraid  
9 to speak my mind. I am afraid, I hope this  
10 isn't about eminent domain, I hope that it can  
11 be fair and honest, because I don't want this  
12 to happen to anybody else.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Don Baldwin, 366  
14 Readington Road.

15 I agree with that young lady that just  
16 spoke, because my family knows the abuse of  
17 eminent domain. I was in court for nearly two

18 years with the abuse of another county, so  
19 this matter is all too sensitive in my home.

20 I would like to say that I am against  
21 the passage of this bond tonight on multiple  
22 myriads of reasons, including my tax bill is  
23 high enough already. I think that eminent  
24 domain is an abuse, and let's shame the devil  
25 and tell the truth, tonight's meeting is about

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1 eminent domain. The speakers at this podium  
2 will not alter the vote tonight, Mr. Shamey  
3 spoke about the EPA, the meeting was an  
4 insult. It was a fait accompli. This is a  
5 fait accompli tonight. I would like to say  
6 that if this Committee is so certain and so  
7 confident and this Committee is 100 percent  
8 behind you, you should have no problem putting  
9 this into a referendum before the voters.  
10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. SOLBERG: Thor Solberg.

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: You really need to bear  
14 down on the microphone.

15 MR. SOLBERG: My name is Thor Solberg,

16 and I am a principal in Solberg Aviation,  
17 which owns the property that Solberg Airport  
18 is on.

19 I have been here all evening listening  
20 to the comments of everyone. It is clear that  
21 there are, genuine emotions on both sides of  
22 the issue here, and we are very cognizant of  
23 those issues.

24 When the last bond ordinance was  
25 proposed and the public came and said we don't

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1 want you taking this family's property away  
2 from them, we want you to work with them to  
3 find a solution that we can all live with,  
4 the then Mayor Gatti came to me and said,  
5 "Let's sit down and talk." And we opened up  
6 ourselves to that negotiation, because that is  
7 in the best interests of everybody. It is in  
8 the best interests of the Solbergs, and it is  
9 in the best interests of everybody that lives  
10 in town.

11 There was only one premise that I said  
12 at the beginning of that negotiation, and that  
13 was to strive to find a solution that would  
14 allow the airport to provide benefits to the

15 town, while protecting the town from any undue  
16 intrusion from the airplanes operating there.  
17 We talked about a lot of ways that it could be  
18 done, but we needed to come to an under-  
19 standing of what was reasonable and what was  
20 not.

21 Obviously, airplanes taking off every  
22 30 seconds is totally unreasonable. An  
23 airplane that takes off once a year is well  
24 within reason. Somewhere between those  
25 numbers is a reasonable number, and that is a

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1 very difficult and somewhat esoteric, I think,  
2 program to try to find, and it takes a lot of  
3 sound experts, and I talked to Mayor Gatti  
4 about retaining such experts. We had a list  
5 of experts that had been recommended to them.  
6 There were two of them in particular on that  
7 list, both of them I agreed were the best in  
8 the industry. Neither of them were retained.

9 And the negotiations, after the  
10 election, just went downhill. They were no  
11 longer interested in talking about measuring  
12 the impact of the airport on the community.  
13 They were only interested in defining specific

14 limitations. Since we did not have a proposed  
15 change in mind, it was very difficult to  
16 analyze any impact of what would happen.

17 I have listened to the people tonight,  
18 and I apologize if it seems that there was a  
19 lot of confusion in what we are saying. There  
20 was a Master Plan done ten years ago. In the  
21 last ten years nothing has been done to  
22 implement that plan, and there is no plan now  
23 to do anything to implement that plan. That  
24 is why I say that we are not planning any  
25 changes, that we are happy with the type of

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1 airport that we have right now in the  
2 community. I think that we are very proud of  
3 being able to offer to everyone in town the  
4 opportunity to come to the airport and enjoy  
5 the open space that has been there for almost  
6 70 years.

7 It is important, and I think Mayor  
8 Shamey in a way alluded to it earlier, for  
9 everyone to recognize that we can't make a  
10 change without a lot of red tape, none of  
11 which is in process, and not the least of

12 which is the approval of a site plan from  
13 Readington Township.

14 Mayor Shamey said that Readington  
15 Township has not adopted the State Airport  
16 Safety Zoning Act, which means we have a  
17 classification as a pre-existing non-  
18 conforming use in the zone that we are  
19 operating, in a zone that is a residential  
20 zone and, therefore, we don't have any rights  
21 to do anything unless we get a variance from  
22 the Township.

23 People have been talking about \$12  
24 million that the FAA has to set aside. With  
25 all due respect to Mayor Shamey, that money is

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1 not set aside for Solberg Aviation, it is a  
2 long document that inventories all of the  
3 needs of aviation across the country. And if  
4 you added them all up, there would be more  
5 need there than the Government could ever fund  
6 in the lifetime of myself, my children and  
7 their children.

8 There is very little money available  
9 in the FAA right now, and the odds of our  
10 getting any money for any improvement, if we

11 were to apply for it, is rather limited, if  
12 almost non-existent. But the important thing,  
13 I think, is that we have not applied for it.  
14 We have not applied for any money whatsoever.  
15 We have not applied for any changes at the  
16 airport whatsoever. The only thing we have  
17 applied for from a funding point of view is  
18 for the New Jersey Division of Aeronautics,  
19 and that is to rehabilitate our existing  
20 facility, including taxiways, runways which  
21 are cracked and to actually pave some of the  
22 areas we use, in terms of our taxiways and  
23 ramps, so they can be used in wet weather  
24 safely.  
25 But never any sort of an expansion or

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1 addition that would lengthen the runway beyond  
2 what it is currently licensed at, 3,735.

3 I am running out of time, I guess.

4 MAYOR SHAMEY: You can go on for a  
5 couple more minutes.

6 MR. SOLBERG: I came here to speak not  
7 about the airport or its plans, other than to  
8 say that we don't have construction plans or  
9 anything other than what is there right now.

10 I came to speak about the bond.  
11 Before I speak about the bond, though, based  
12 on some of the comments I heard this evening,  
13 I want to talk about finding a solution.  
14 Bob Kalinich made an excellent speech.  
15 Ed Dudzinski made some excellent points. My  
16 neighbor on Polaski Road made some excellent  
17 points. We all live there together. I am  
18 part of Solberg Airport, and Solberg Airport  
19 has been a resident for many years, and it is  
20 true that I did grow up here and I did raise  
21 my children here, and Solberg airport has been  
22 my life. It is a part of my heart, it is a  
23 part of what our father gave to us.  
24 So I have a tie with Readington that  
25 will never go away, and I would like to find a

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1 solution myself. I think that if we went back  
2 to the negotiating table and I disagree with  
3 the mediator, I could not see a mediator as  
4 someone who would establish a solution, they  
5 do not establish a solution, they establish a  
6 method of solution between the parties, and it  
7 is clear from the confusion I hear from the

8 people who speak, that there is a true  
9 misunderstanding of what this negotiation was  
10 all about.

11 I spoke with someone in the hall  
12 earlier and he looked at Mayor Shamey's  
13 letter, and looked at my letter and said, "How  
14 can these people be in the same room talking  
15 about the same thing, because they are totally  
16 different."

17 A mediator or party, a facilitator,  
18 maybe Ed Dudzinski, maybe somebody in the  
19 community that everybody trusts, can be the  
20 person that issues the statement and then  
21 there is no confusion. Then there is no  
22 argument about he said/she said, this says, or  
23 someone else said.

24 But we need time to do that. If we  
25 start talking about solutions that actually

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1 deal with the problem -- I appreciate the  
2 problem. I grew up on the end of the runway  
3 on Polaski Road, and my kids grew up on the  
4 end of the runway on Polaski Road and we are  
5 here, the airplanes fly over our house all the  
6 time, so I know what airplanes sound like, and

7 I know too many of them are too loud or too  
8 much.

9 We are willing and we want to  
10 establish some criteria which puts a limit on  
11 it, so we know it never will have the  
12 intrusion of a Morristown or Teterboro or, God  
13 forbid LaGuardia, and that is where we want to  
14 go. But there is an impatience that seems to  
15 be present to find a solution, and I can  
16 appreciate that.

17 Many people who spoke tonight in this  
18 room, ourselves included, who have been living  
19 there for a long time, know that for the last  
20 five years we haven't been doing anything.  
21 Everybody has been happy. We want to make  
22 some improvements to the existing facility.

23 If we, in the future, ever wanted to  
24 do anything, we would come to the Town and ask  
25 to do it. That has been our position, and I

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1 believe that has been very consistent. The  
2 position ten years ago was that the Master  
3 Plan needs to be updated. It has never been  
4 pursued. It is not being pursued now. As far  
5 as the bond is concerned, it is not needed for

6 us to negotiate in good faith with the Town,  
7 it is only needed for condemnation. It is  
8 only needed for the use of eminent domain, and  
9 I have to say and I believe most people in  
10 this town will agree, that eminent domain is  
11 fundamentally wrong.

12 I can only think of my dad and how  
13 much he loved this country for what it stood  
14 for. He would be shocked to think that what  
15 he left his children could be taken away from  
16 them because of the Government taking it.  
17 That is not to mention the cost. I can agree  
18 that it is only an extra 50 bucks a year or 60  
19 bucks a year, and that is assuming the judge  
20 at the end of the whole proceeding says it is  
21 22 million. What if the judge says it is 60  
22 million or maybe more, maybe it is okay for an  
23 extra \$500 a year, but I beg you not to be so  
24 callous. I beg you to understand that we are  
25 people who spent a lifetime on a piece of

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1 property, and we are willing to make sure that  
2 property does not hurt you. We want to work  
3 with people to do that.

4 I would suggest that maybe we have a  
5 meeting where we can be present, all of us,  
6 you knew my sister couldn't be here tonight,  
7 so it really didn't -- it really wasn't the  
8 proper venue to have all the Solbergs present.  
9 Maybe we can in a month or two, but let us put  
10 together some kind of a program to, basically,  
11 in more detail, tell you what I just told you  
12 now, because condemnation is the wrong thing,  
13 and the sad part is that the people of the  
14 town, they do not have an opportunity to voice  
15 their opinion about it. It is only the  
16 decision of the Committee. They don't have to  
17 seek your referendum, they don't have to seek  
18 your approval. There is only one way that the  
19 voter can actually determine for themselves  
20 the outcome, and that is to petition against  
21 the bond ordinance that is passed.

22 If the people of the town petition the  
23 Government to have the right to vote on the  
24 bond ordinance, then you will have the right  
25 to vote. I urge you that this Committee does

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1 not need to press forward without allowing  
2 some time for us to discuss this in a

3 neighborly way.

4 I urge everyone to at least petition  
5 them to have the opportunity for everyone to  
6 speak on the issue, everyone to have a vote,  
7 because I think the people in town deserve it.

8 Everybody who pays taxes in the town  
9 deserves the right on such an enormous  
10 acquisition as this airport, such an enormous  
11 liability that this would be financially.

12 Everybody in town deserves a right to have a  
13 vote on that.

14 But I don't know if you guys want to  
15 hold up.

16 MAYOR SHAMEY: I would like to address  
17 a couple of things that you said. Are you  
18 finished?

19 MR. SOLBERG: Yes. I can sit down.

20 MAYOR SHAMEY: Mr. Solberg, one thing  
21 I want to make clear to you, you said we don't  
22 need a bond ordinance to negotiate. Well,  
23 keep in mind that we still have to pass an  
24 ordinance to move forward with the eminent  
25 domain. You asked for good faith, and you

1 show none. You asked for honesty and respect

2 in our dealings with you, and you show us  
3 none. What are we to do with letters to the  
4 editor and to the public? We are not  
5 proposing extending the runway. August, the  
6 majority of the residents, residents like  
7 things the way they are, we have no intention  
8 of doing anything to hurt Readington or damage  
9 their special quality of life. November 2nd,  
10 it is unfortunate some of us have used the  
11 airport to drive us apart.

12 August 22nd in a transcript from a  
13 public hearing, "Keeping the property in green  
14 and open would be a cornerstone in our future  
15 negotiations with the Committee. We are  
16 determined to make sure no development  
17 occurs."

18 It is time, with all due respect, for  
19 an honesty check. It is time for you to tell  
20 the residents of Readington exactly what you  
21 would like to do. You say there is no money  
22 available, this is only a planning document,  
23 and I said that. I know that it is only a  
24 planning document.

25 MR. SOLBERG: I heard you say that.

1                   MAYOR SHAMEY: You haven't applied for  
2 anything, yet you did get on the brink of  
3 approval in the environmental assessment  
4 process. You want consideration from us, and  
5 respect, and honesty, and good faith and you  
6 show us none. You laugh at us. Enough is  
7 enough.

8                   So you must start with some honesty,  
9 okay. You have to do us a favor and please  
10 stop insulting us with these push-polls.

11                   (Applause.)

12                   MAYOR SHAMEY: Your push-poll, I  
13 probably would answer to every question on it.  
14 You see me ride my bike at your airport, I  
15 love it over there, I love the airport and the  
16 Balloon Festival, I would vote yes on probably  
17 all of these. Well, not all of them, but  
18 please stop insulting us with the push-polls,  
19 they are a joke.

20                   A VOICE: And you don't --

21                   MAYOR SHAMEY: Please don't yell out  
22 from the audience. Please don't do that.

23                   Now, you talked about no money being  
24 available. This is only a blank document, but  
25 what you didn't talk about is what we want,

1 and the problem we are faced with is this, I  
2 haven't any reason to believe Mr. Gatti and  
3 Ms. Allen came back to this Committee and made  
4 up what happened at these negotiation  
5 sessions. I believe what they told me, okay,  
6 and what they told me, and you can confirm  
7 this or deny it right now, is that your  
8 advisor, and you started out saying 5,600 feet  
9 or nothing else. Then you slipped back to  
10 5,000. What I am here to ask you tonight is  
11 did you or did you not say in the course of  
12 these negotiations anything less than 5,000  
13 feet on the runway is a no go?

14 MR. SOLBERG: I did not say that.

15 MAYOR SHAMEY: I am not finished yet.

16 You opened another door. Mr. Berger on the  
17 phone to me --

18 MR. SOLBERG: You want me to talk?

19 MAYOR SHAMEY: I will give you a

20 chance to respond to me, but I am not finished  
21 yet.

22 MR. SOLBERG: It will be a lot easier  
23 for me since I am older than you to respond

24 one at a time than all the way at the end.

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: Let me ask the

1 question. Do you contend Mr. Gatti and Ms.  
2 Allen lied to this Committee when they said  
3 that was your position?

4 MR. SOLBERG: No.

5 MAYOR SHAMEY: Did you or did you not  
6 say you wanted a 5,000 foot runway and nothing  
7 else?

8 MR. SOLBERG: May I explain?

9 MAYOR SHAMEY: No, you can say yes or  
10 no.

11 A VOICE: Give him a chance to  
12 explain.

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: Don't shout out from  
14 the audience. And just answer my question.

15 MR. SOLBERG: Am I on trial here?

16 MAYOR SHAMEY: Answer the question yes  
17 or no.

18 MR. SOLBERG: This is the exact reason  
19 there should be a third party, an impartial  
20 party because, obviously, there is a  
21 misunderstanding here.

22 MAYOR SHAMEY: No, there is mistrust  
23 here.

24 A VOICE: Who is Larry Berger?

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: You had conditional

1 approval, that was ready to go, but for the  
2 environmental assessment, the only thing  
3 standing in the way between the expansion and  
4 that was the final checking off of the  
5 approval of the DOT. So what are we to do?

6 MR. SOLBERG: That is not correct,  
7 sir.

8 MAYOR SHAMEY: How is it not correct?

9 MR. SOLBERG: All we had was an  
10 approved Master Plan document, a planning  
11 document, not a construction document. It is  
12 not available for construction until you do  
13 the engineering and get environmental  
14 approvals and site plan approvals from DOT,  
15 the plans from the FAA, years of work. We are  
16 nowhere near it and we haven't even started.

17 MAYOR SHAMEY: But that is what you  
18 want to do, right? What do you want to do?

19 MR. SOLBERG: I don't know what we  
20 want to do. You are forcing me to say  
21 something.

22 MAYOR SHAMEY: It is unfortunate that  
23 someone used the airport to drive us apart.

24 MR. SOLBERG: You are doing a very

good job of it.

1                   MAYOR SHAMEY: Quite frankly, you are  
2                   doing a great job of it, and maybe you are  
3                   having fun, I don't know, but I am not having  
4                   fun anymore. It is time to move this thing  
5                   forward, and it is time for you to get honest.

6                   MR. SOLBERG: I have been honest.

7                   MAYOR SHAMEY: No, you haven't. You  
8                   haven't been honest, you say one thing to the  
9                   papers and the residents and another thing in  
10                  here.

11                  MR. SOLBERG: List them again, check  
12                  them off one at a time.

13                  MAYOR SHAMEY: No, I won't. Enough is  
14                  enough.

15                  MR. SOLBERG: Everything you read was  
16                  true, everything I said is true.

17                  MAYOR SHAMEY: Okay, hold on a second,  
18                  because I have a good one for you. You told  
19                  the Courier News you have no plan or intention  
20                  to extend the runway. Is that true?

21                  MR. SOLBERG: That is what I said to  
22                  you tonight.

23                  MAYOR SHAMEY: That is true, you don't

24 want to extend the runway?

25 MR. SOLBERG: We don't want to do it

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1 today.

2 MAYOR SHAMEY: That is all. Now we  
3 know you want to expand the runway, but not

4 today. We are making some progress here.

5 MR. SOLBERG: I didn't say I was going  
6 to expand the runway.

7 A VOICE: How long?

8 MR. SOLBERG: That is up to future  
9 generations to decide. How can you make  
10 judgments of what people will want to do 30  
11 years from today?

12 MR. AURIEMMA: If I can interject and  
13 say something, at the February 6th meeting  
14 Mrs. Nagle said that we don't want to expand  
15 the airport in the near future, within the  
16 next couple of years. So that is not 30 years  
17 from now.

18 MR. SOLBERG: You are missing the  
19 point. The point is that any future request,  
20 any addition like anyone else in town, will  
21 have to come back to you to analyze whether or  
22 not that addition would have an adverse

23 impact, and if it does, it won't happen.

24 MAYOR SHAMEY: You know that statement  
25 is less than accurate. You know that. Once

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1 you take Federal money --

2 MR. SOLBERG: Nobody is taking Federal  
3 money.

4 MAYOR SHAMEY: How will you expand it?  
5 We are not paying for it.

6 MR. SOLBERG: We are not expanding.

7 MAYOR SHAMEY: Here is where this  
8 Committee, where the people say this is a rush  
9 and so forth, this is not a rush, this has  
10 gone on long enough. It is not a rash  
11 decision.

12 MR. SOLBERG: I didn't expect you not  
13 to do what you are going to do tonight  
14 because, as someone pointed out, I thought it  
15 was Bud -- but this really isn't a public  
16 hearing to listen to people.

17 MAYOR SHAMEY: Sure it is.

18 MR. SOLBERG: No, it is a requirement  
19 of the law, because you already decided to  
20 vote the bond in prior to the hearing, and

21 that is what you said.

22 MAYOR SHAMEY: I did? Unless you came  
23 in here and did something miraculous, I knew  
24 walking in here I would vote yes. I don't  
25 know about the rest of the Committee, but I

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1 knew I was.

2 MR. SOLBERG: I have to say to the  
3 people of this town that the only reason for  
4 this bond ordinance is for you to proceed with  
5 eminent domain.

6 MAYOR SHAMEY: Maybe it will make you  
7 know that we are serious.

8 MR. SOLBERG: I know you are serious.

9 MAYOR SHAMEY: Treat us with some  
10 respect.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. SOLBERG: I am trying.

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: You are not doing a  
14 good job with what you tell the press and the  
15 residents, you have to get honest.

16 MR. SOLBERG: I am honest with you, we  
17 have nothing on the drawing board to do, and  
18 there is no Federal money coming that will  
19 change or, in any way, hurt your position. We

20 are willing, as we said at the beginning of  
21 the last negotiation, not to do anything to  
22 prejudice your position. You don't do  
23 anything to prejudice our position.

24 MAYOR SHAMEY: Here is the deal, at  
25 this point the ball is in your court. If you

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1 have anything to present to the Committee, you  
2 have been talking about it for months or  
3 years.

4 MR. SOLBERG: Let's have a meeting.

5 MAYOR SHAMEY: We had a meeting, you  
6 want to send some information in, send it in.

7 MR. GATTI: First of all, I would like  
8 to say that tonight's bond ordinance is only  
9 authorization for us to go ahead and put the  
10 money up, put the money where our mouth is.  
11 There will be no tax increase unless the bond  
12 is actually drawn down which, as I said  
13 earlier, I am still hopeful we can come to an  
14 agreement and, Thor, I am willing to meet with  
15 you again and continue the process. As Gerry  
16 said, it is the next step in the negotiation  
17 process. Then, if this is not a matter of the  
18 bond to acquire the airport, that would

19 require another action on behalf of this  
20 Committee. We went on the record tonight  
21 saying we didn't want to buy the airport, we  
22 are still seeking the common ground. We  
23 started to talk about it last August, and that  
24 is the open space around the airport. Now we  
25 are faced with, and I have to tell you, Thor,

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1 I didn't say you said to me 5,600. Five  
2 thousand, that is what you said.

3 MR. SOLBERG: We talked about a lot of  
4 things, it was all in the context of negotia-  
5 tions, not a proposal.

6 MR. GATTI: I agree, I would walk away  
7 and say maybe it is posturing on their behalf.

8 What is the story? But the point is I was  
9 willing to go on until Larry Berger said to  
10 me, "You are wasting my time, negotiations are  
11 over." What am I to do with that statement?

12 I said, "Let's talk", and he said he doesn't  
13 want to talk, he wasn't interested. So I am  
14 willing now, I am going on the record to say  
15 tomorrow or Saturday, the schedule is tough,  
16 maybe Sunday, I would like to sit down and

17 Suzie is on holiday, but I am willing to go  
18 back and start talking again, because I think  
19 the next step is more formalized negotiations.

20 MR. SOLBERG: Let me tell you the  
21 danger of that, and I say this to everybody  
22 out here. Whether you agree with what the  
23 Committee wants to do or whether you don't  
24 agree with what the Committee wants to do, you  
25 should at least agree that the people in town

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1 have the right to decide whether to take out a  
2 \$22 million home equity loan.

3 MR. GATTI: You had no problem asking  
4 for \$36 million. If I said we agree to the  
5 5,000 feet and \$36,000 million, would you be  
6 standing here?

7 MR. SOLBERG: The people in the town  
8 have the right to voice their opinion on  
9 whether or not to take out a \$22 million home  
10 equity loan, as Mr. Gatti calls it. The only  
11 way people in this town will have a right to  
12 vote is if they petition this Committee to get  
13 that right, and I urge everybody in town to  
14 participate in the petition, so at least we  
15 know that the people in town are establishing

16 the money.

17 A VOICE: Can I ask a question? If it  
18 goes to public vote, will you do that?

19 MR. SOLBERG: We are talking about the  
20 bond issue?

21 A VOICE: Will you put in writing that  
22 you won't expand?

23 MR. SOLBERG: It is good to have the  
24 colloquy.

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: I understand.

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1 It is time to call the question.

2 MR. AURIEMMA: Mr. Solberg, your  
3 sister, Suzanne, wrote a letter. Would you  
4 like to read it into the record?

5 MR. SOLBERG: Okay. This is a letter  
6 written by my sister, Suzanne, to the Township  
7 Committee, and it is dated February 16th.

8 "As explained to you at our last  
9 Township meeting when I pleaded with you to  
10 postpone the second reading of your proposed  
11 bond ordinance, I will regretfully not be in  
12 attendance. I am taking your suggestion and  
13 submitting a letter instead. You are confused  
14 about your reasoning for the bond ordinance.

15 "Last year you withdrew the bond  
16 ordinance so that we could negotiate in good  
17 faith. Now, in February, you are stating you  
18 need to pass this very same bond ordinance so  
19 that we can negotiate in good faith. We  
20 believe the bond ordinance is totally  
21 unnecessary. There is not a property in  
22 Readington Township that does not consider you  
23 to be a qualified buyer with financial  
24 reimbursements which you stated it is in this  
25 case. Readington Township" -- there are a lot

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1 of typos here, I am not sure what this says --  
2 I am trying to read this. "Readington  
3 Township has a longstanding history of  
4 purchasing land, either through development  
5 rights or fee simple. We agree with what Paul  
6 Sauerland said last fall, the real reason for  
7 the bond ordinance is to put you one step  
8 closer to condemning our property. This bond  
9 ordinance is not necessary any more than the  
10 hiring of legal counsel that specializes in  
11 eminent domain." I am speaking of Mr.  
12 Rhatican who, I see, walked away. There hs

13

is, in the back.

14

15

"The professed purpose of sitting down as neighbors and talking seems to" -- I will

16

stop with that paragraph. The word

17

"negotiate" by Webster's Dictionary means to

18

confer and/or discuss a need to reach an

19

agreement. "We need to focus on the view to

20

reach an agreement. With outside professional

21

help, we are confident we can negotiate

22

successfully.

23

"As you admitted, the citizens of

24

Readington Township do not want you to condemn

25

our land. They are adamantly opposed to

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1

taking private property and know the tax

2

burden associated with such an adverse action.

3

Please inform the public which specific

4

sources you intend to seek reimbursement from

5

if you use eminent domain. We understand

6

these entities are limited and may require a

7

willing buyer/willing seller relationship as a

8

prerequisite to this. Real estate taxes in

9

Readington Township are high enough, without

10

adding tens of millions of dollars of more

11

debt.

12                   "Moreover, you are premature. You are  
13                   in the process of passing a bond ordinance for  
14                   roughly \$22 million, and from what it actually  
15                   is, the DOT has an appraisal, and very quickly  
16                   can arrive at the value of \$18.5 million.  
17                   Your two appraisals were at nine million, the  
18                   NJ DOT recognized in April of '02 that this  
19                   number was not accurate and adjusted the  
20                   number upward of 22 million, which was as far  
21                   as it comfortably could go. The agreement on  
22                   the sale called for another appraisal for that  
23                   purpose. The last appraisal in May of '03 was  
24                   \$42 million, and that is almost three years  
25                   ago. Again, every property owner in

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1                   Readington knows land value has increased  
2                   considerably over the last few years. Please  
3                   reconsider and table this bond ordinance.  
4                   There is a solution out there as both the  
5                   Hunterdon Review and Courier News editorials  
6                   suggests. We need to seek the help of a  
7                   professional negotiator if we focus on the  
8                   issues in our positions I am certain we can  
9                   reach a compromise that we both can embrace.  
10                  Thank you for your consideration, Suzanne

11 Solberg Nagle."

12 A VOICE: Gentlemen, ladies, I  
13 respectfully call for action on the ordinance.

14 MAYOR SHAMEY: We are asking you to  
15 wrap it up, Mr. Solberg.

16 MR. SOLBERG: I have one thought, to  
17 remind everyone of and Mr. Rhatican can talk  
18 about this a lot better than I can, but once  
19 the Town decides to go down the route of  
20 condemnation, there is no longer any control  
21 that anyone has on the value of the property.  
22 It will be determined by the Court. Once that  
23 value is determined, the Township is obligated  
24 to pay it, and if it ends up at 60 million  
25 instead of 20 million, that means the Town is

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1 obligated. Right now with the \$22 million  
2 bond, we are almost at 75 percent bonding  
3 capacity. If that number were to double, we  
4 would be at 100 percent bonding capacity.  
5 There is no room in the law to fix the crack  
6 in the road, and it is not necessary. It is  
7 an expense that is not necessary. I again  
8 urge everyone to give the right to your

9 neighbors to have a vote in this, because I am  
10 not confident that everybody in town wants to  
11 spend even 22 million to take this property  
12 away from us. Thank you.

13 MR. RHATICAN: Can I respond to the  
14 point?

15 MAYOR SHAMEY: Certainly.

16 MR. RHATICAN: Mr. Solberg mentioned  
17 the factor, he opined on the fact that once  
18 eminent domain goes to the Court, you lose  
19 control, is what he said, about the amount  
20 paid for the property or the value to be paid  
21 for the property. I want to make two points  
22 so everyone understands, including the members  
23 of the Committee, understands the process a  
24 little bit better.

25 First of all, when an eminent domain

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1 matter goes to a court for the issue of value,  
2 it is left to a jury. I think it was  
3 mentioned earlier that a judge decides what  
4 the value might be. If there is a dispute  
5 among the parties, first it goes to what is  
6 called a Commissioners' hearing, and a panel  
7 of three Commissioners is appointed by the

8 Court to hear proofs from both sides. The  
9 panel of three Commissioners consists  
10 typically of two attorneys and a local real  
11 estate broker. Generally, the attorneys are  
12 real estate attorneys familiar with the  
13 process. That Commissioner, that panel or  
14 Commissioners' panel will make a decision as  
15 to valuation. If one of the parties then has  
16 an opportunity to appeal from that, and  
17 ultimately if there is an appeal, it will go  
18 to a jury and the jury decides the value.  
19 There is a provision in the Eminent Domain Act  
20 that, in certain circumstances, it permits a  
21 condemning authority to go through that  
22 process and figure out what it would have to  
23 pay for the property, and if it deems that it  
24 is too expensive, it can back out at that  
25 point. It doesn't need to proceed with the

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1 eminent domain or the taking if, in fact, it  
2 is determined that the evaluation exceeds what  
3 the party wishes to pay or the amount the  
4 condemning party thinks is reasonable for the  
5 property.

6 I wanted to make sure that that was

7 clear for everybody.

8 MAYOR SHAMEY: Thank you.

9 MR. SIMON: Good evening, my name is  
10 Mike Simon, S-I-M-O-N, 22 Witherspoon Street,  
11 Whitehouse Station.

12 My background, I have 27 years in  
13 aviation, including 13 years in the Orlando  
14 Aviation Authority as senior project planner  
15 and director. I helped build and design  
16 (inaudible). I am a member of Triple A  
17 Association of Airport Executives, I am also a  
18 member of ELTHAB Aircraft Owners and Pilots  
19 Association, and also have some stick time as  
20 a pilot. I have flown in and out of Solberg  
21 many times. I like the airport, I love  
22 aviation.

23 I listened to Mr. Solberg for 25  
24 minutes, and I didn't hear anything. I heard  
25 words. I saw lips moving. But to respond

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1 directly to the issue at hand, I heard  
2 semantics.

3 The yardstick for measuring the  
4 matrix, the unit of measurement to determine

5 the solution for this problem is very simple,  
6 if you want jets, allow a runway longer than  
7 3,800 feet. That is about it. Anything else  
8 that goes on at the airport will be generated  
9 from the business of the use of a runway of  
10 less than 3,800 feet. Let the market drive  
11 that.

12 Also, in the future, as Mr. Solberg  
13 says, he can't commit to, as aircraft become  
14 more and more efficient, it will need longer  
15 runways. There is one purpose in having a  
16 longer runway, and that is to have jets.  
17 Every single distance prop aircraft that  
18 exists today on the planet can take off on  
19 3,700 feet of runway. Maybe not with full  
20 fuel for all of them, but the majority can.

21 I listened to the semantical  
22 statements, I didn't want it developed, but I  
23 want 500,000 square feet of development. I  
24 don't want to expand, but my Master Plan I put  
25 in has an independent goal of 5,600 foot

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1 runways. And by the way, I have to have a  
2 runway protection zone in Hillcrest Park, so  
3 the Township needs to give that to me in an

4 easement; otherwise, the FAA will try to work  
5 something out where I get to use it anyway.

6           There are lots of details. If you  
7 want to narrow it down, the runway stays less  
8 than 3,800 feet if you don't want jets. In  
9 the future, if aircraft manufacturers create  
10 aircraft that are jets and can still operate  
11 on 3,800 square feet, you have still done your  
12 job for today. You have protected the  
13 community, the residents, the values and the  
14 type of lifestyle that we all came here for.  
15 Whether you have been here 40 years or four  
16 years, it is irrelevant. The issue is here,  
17 the issue is now, it is not a hypothetical of  
18 why, what if. Please pass the referendum.

19           MR. FISCHER: My name is Morty  
20 Fischer, I was not going to come up here  
21 tonight, I wanted to listen really to both  
22 sides, and I want to thank Thor for coming up  
23 tonight, because I was hoping to hear from the  
24 family. I know they didn't have the entire  
25 family represented here tonight, but I know it

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1 wasn't easy coming up here.

2           I have been following this for many

3 years, for as many years as I can remember  
4 living here, since at least the last 13 years,  
5 and I think you have a very unique opportunity  
6 here right now, probably today was one of the  
7 biggest hurdles with both the Township and  
8 Thor publicly speaking. It might be a little  
9 unorthodox, and I would like to see more of  
10 that. I think it eliminates some of the he  
11 said/she said opportunities. Perhaps instead  
12 of mediators, we have both parties negotiate  
13 in public on this situation.

14 The biggest issue I think that came  
15 out tonight is it is not an issue of today  
16 that is on the table, it is an issue of  
17 tomorrow. I think a lot of people share my  
18 feeling that we would like to see some type of  
19 finality in the agreement. I appreciate the  
20 legacy the Solberg family has with the airport  
21 in the community, but at the same time, all of  
22 the homeowners share the same concern of  
23 balancing increasing taxes and the cost of  
24 this bond with the loss or potential loss of  
25 future property values.

1 I do have one question with regard to  
2 the bond itself, it being \$22 million: If  
3 again you have the opportunity, I hope that  
4 the family will continue to negotiate and show  
5 the Township that they do mean what they say  
6 about not expanding. Again, I would like to  
7 see some negotiating, but if negotiations were  
8 to exceed the \$22 million bond, what does that  
9 do to negotiations, and what would happen with  
10 any additional amounts? Would that have to go  
11 to additional bonds on that?

12 MR. RHATICAN: Yes.

13 MR. AURIEMMA: You have to wrap it up.

14 MR. FISCHER: I will. I understand  
15 right now that Thor is suggesting that you  
16 keep the airport small, and I hope that we can  
17 come to some kind of mutual grounds. I don't  
18 believe mediation or having a mediation or  
19 going out to referendum is the answer. I have  
20 read through the documents, but sometimes  
21 there is a middle ground and in some issues  
22 there is a middle ground. I understand this.  
23 So anyway, thank you again for coming up, and  
24 I do applaud the Township Committee and I  
25 appreciate the information you are putting on

1 the website.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. BRIGHTWELL: James Brightwell,

4 Pleasant Run Road.

5 Mr. Solberg had an opportunity tonight

6 to provide residents with concrete,

7 unambiguous assurances that he would not

8 expand the airport. He did not do so. His

9 words were, and I wrote them down, I believe

10 that he said, "The Master Plan has not been

11 pursued and is not being pursued now." He

12 chose his words very carefully. He didn't say

13 he will not do it in the future, he is not

14 entering into a contractual obligation to do

15 that. I'd like to encourage the Committee to

16 take whatever steps it can for the residents,

17 and the property values, and the quality of

18 life in Readington that a future expansion of

19 the airport would undertake. Readington

20 residents aren't stupid, they can understand

21 to a great degree the processes that are

22 required to expand the airport and, although

23 the Master Plan does not ticket getting money,

24 we see over and over again across the country

25 how these airports have expanded by going

1 through this process, and within a year or  
2 two, they have a Master Plan and funding from  
3 Congress under the transportation bill and it  
4 is expanded. So I would like to encourage the  
5 Committee to proceed forward, and I think Mr.  
6 Solberg made his intentions quite clear  
7 tonight. I would like you to go ahead and  
8 pass the ordinance and protect our way of  
9 life.

10 (Applause.)

11 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there anybody else  
12 in the back who wishes to be heard? You have  
13 to make it brief, you already spoke.

14 MR. DUDZINSKI: Ed Dudzinski. I  
15 appreciate Mr. Gatti's offer to have  
16 discussions, and I also thank Thor for coming  
17 here and speaking. It was very informative.  
18 I thank him for his offer to have the meeting  
19 again in a month or month and a half with his  
20 sisters, but I ask Thor a specific question,  
21 as a sign of good faith, will you agree to  
22 stop using Larry Berger to communicate with  
23 Readington Township?

24 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there anything  
25 further? Are there any further comments from

1 the public on the bond ordinance? I don't see  
2 any.

3 Anyone on the Committee have anything  
4 to say?

5 MR. GATTI: I would like to read  
6 Section 3, to point out what this bond is. It  
7 says it hereby authorizes for the purpose of  
8 financing, why bonds are to be used, is for  
9 the acquisition of or conservation  
10 restrictions and/or development rights on a  
11 portion of certain land and improvements owned  
12 or controlled by, and designated on the  
13 Official Tax Map as Block 48, Lot 23, Block  
14 55, Lot 33, Block 56, Lots 1, 3, 6 and 8,  
15 Block 39, Lot 24 and Block 67, Lot 2, owner  
16 Solberg Aviation/Hromoho.

17 So regardless of having the agreement  
18 at this point in time, or coming out months  
19 from now with an agreement, we will need an  
20 ordinance of this type. There was a comment  
21 made earlier that if the bond is not used,  
22 what would happen to the bond. Will we go  
23 have a party in Atlantic City or something?

24 No. It can only be used for this. If it is  
25 not used, specifically, for this reason, then

1 the bond is just retired.

2 There was a question earlier about  
3 reimbursement of \$17 million, and is it  
4 committed when you talk about debt. I know we  
5 have got reimbursement, too. If you talk  
6 about the 17 million, the commitment on 17  
7 million, do we have commitments on the 17  
8 million reimbursement on the debt.

9 MS. ALLEN: I think all but a million  
10 and a half of that is allocated at the present  
11 time on line items out of the Garden State  
12 Preservation Trust. One and a half million is  
13 revenue that will be generated from the sale  
14 of deed restricted properties.

15 MR. GATTI: So basically, we have a  
16 line item in Garden State Preservation Trust,  
17 which is for Readington Township, and another  
18 17 million and one and a half million by way  
19 of these auctions you may have seen the  
20 Township holds from time to time. is that  
21 correct?

22 MS. ALLEN: That is correct.

23 MR. GATTI: Okay. Someone mentioned  
24 statistically about the letters being

25 available from the Mayor's e-mail. Last year

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1 I was overwhelmed by a large amount of  
2 letters. I don't know if they are still  
3 available or printed out on the website  
4 somewhere.

5 MAYOR SHAMEY: I can speak to that.

6 MR. GATTI: But Tom has done an  
7 analysis on the number of letters, they are  
8 overwhelmingly to protect the quality of life  
9 in Readington and the environment.

10 The only other thing I would like to  
11 add is that informational meeting was  
12 discussed back in December with Solbergs  
13 publicly, they said no at that time and  
14 negotiations broke off. On January 5th I did  
15 mention to Suzie Nagle Solberg that there  
16 would be a meeting and they were invited.  
17 They couldn't prepare in time. Here it is 45  
18 days later and they still haven't an  
19 informational meeting with the public. That  
20 would be a helpful process, and I also, at  
21 that time, committed the Township Committee  
22 and experts to go, and we did discuss it at  
23 this group, but the point is that we have been

24 accused of not being fair in the process, the  
25 process has been very fair. I think we have

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1 done a fair job communicating to the public  
2 the events that were taking place, and being  
3 told this is rhetoric, I am just not happy  
4 with it.

5 MR. AURIEMMA: Some of the questions,  
6 one was the schools. I hear over and over  
7 again that they had no business building the  
8 schools here, but I took the dates from the  
9 State of New Jersey Department of Education,  
10 and this is the breakdown as to how the  
11 schools came about being here. '62, the  
12 District's Master Plan included the building  
13 of schools, both schools, that means Holland  
14 Brook. That was 1962. In 1991, that was the  
15 first proposal to build Holland Brook School.  
16 In 1996, a referendum was passed to construct  
17 Holland Brook School. In September 1997, that  
18 was the Airport Master Plan that was  
19 published. My point is that the school was  
20 planned long before the Master Plan came out.

21 As far as the e-mails are concerned, I

22 read most of the e-mails. I'm sorry, all of  
23 the e-mails in 2005 and most in 2006. These  
24 were unsolicited e-mails. I counted 150  
25 e-mails received, 125 were requesting no

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1 airport expansion and the other 25, that they  
2 were not opposed to the airport expansion.

3 A gentleman here spoke about what  
4 opportunities are there for the insiders. I  
5 have to say I am insulted by that statement.  
6 I could speak for the members here, I don't  
7 think there is any opportunity here for the  
8 Township Committee to prosper from this.

9 Another comment was made that the  
10 airport was here longer than most of us. I  
11 think the point is it is not how long they  
12 were here, the question is how long we want to  
13 stay here. Thank you.

14 MAYOR SHAMEY: Any other comments?

15 MS. ALLEN: I would like to say that

16 Readington Township has a long history over  
17 two decades of preserving open space as a way  
18 of protecting farmland, wildlife habitats,  
19 water quality, the historic character, and I  
20 think protecting the airport. There is a

21 reason to preserve open space in our township.  
22 This bond, if passed, and if an acquisition  
23 were to move forward, would be used  
24 principally to purchase 650 acres of open  
25 space. Centrally located in our township and

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1 extremely important to the character of our  
2 township. The preservation of this open space  
3 would be important to protecting the airport  
4 itself and the viability of that airport.

5 I think it would be in the Township's  
6 best interests to protect that, and we work as  
7 hard as we can to come up with an amicable  
8 solution and negotiated settlement, and I am  
9 committed to that.

10 This preservation of this open space  
11 is supported by our Master Plan, the natural  
12 resource and conservation elements in  
13 particular, and also by the Master Plan of the  
14 County and the State of New Jersey. So for  
15 that reason, I am in favor of passing this  
16 bond, because it takes us one step closer to  
17 the goal of furthering this effort.

18 MAYOR SHAMEY: Beatrice?

19 MRS. MUJIR: I just want to say that I

20 think the bond issue is an important step in  
21 moving forward with the negotiations. After  
22 listening to Mr. Solberg tonight, I have lost  
23 complete faith in anything that he has ever  
24 written or anything that he has ever said.  
25 The people I work with on the Township

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1 Committee work all the time on the issues that  
2 affect this township, that affect our quality  
3 of life, our taxes, our roads and affects our  
4 schools. They do it because they love this  
5 community.

6 I think that I was elected by a  
7 majority of the people in this township to  
8 hold the line, to stay steady. I don't like  
9 eminent domain, I never will like eminent  
10 domain, but we are not talking eminent domain  
11 right now, we are talking, hopefully, that we  
12 will come to a resolution. But I have got to  
13 tell you that I have lived here for 36 years.  
14 I moved here in 1970, and I came in at the end  
15 of the jetport and the Solbergs called it a  
16 jetport in those days. I followed it to the  
17 present day. In the late 1990s, Mr. Thor

18 Solberg, I have the quotes at home, said that  
19 "I want to be a reliever airport. I want  
20 Solberg Airport to be a reliever airport. I  
21 want it to be like Morristown." And then when  
22 he said this evening there are no plans to  
23 extend the runway now, I will leave it to  
24 future generations, I think that we all live  
25 in fear of exactly what that might mean. I am

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1 prepared to vote to go forward with this bond  
2 issue this evening.

3 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there anything  
4 further from the Committee? I have a couple  
5 of other things: I got my answer tonight.  
6 When I asked you whether or not you wanted, do  
7 you or do you not want to expand the runway,  
8 which you said to the Courier News, you said  
9 not now. I got my answer, it was yes. Thank  
10 you. Now I got my answer.

11 The other thing is you know there has  
12 been a lot of question why the rush, why do we  
13 need to do that now. That is an easy question  
14 for me, because this is not a rush decision.  
15 This has been going on for decades. There  
16 have been months of negotiations, regional

17 jetports are a lot, they are growing, they are  
18 everywhere, they are increasing Morristown and  
19 Teterboro and stretching them to the limit.

20 You've got 90 to 95 percent through your  
21 environmental process, and we are on the brink  
22 of this happening. The only thing that  
23 stopped this from happening, from you getting  
24 what you wanted was, and I know there are  
25 additional approvals after that, but it would

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1 all come to fruition, the only thing that  
2 stopped it was the Township going for eminent  
3 domain. There is nothing in the market for  
4 developments of this, I disagree with that, I  
5 think if they overflow Morristown and  
6 Teterboro, it is ready to go. So I have been  
7 doing this about eight years, and I don't  
8 intend to sit idly by just to see what  
9 happens. I don't think we will like the  
10 outcome. I don't, and I would never support  
11 bringing at this point some third party  
12 mediator to do our responsibilities. At least  
13 not on my watch, not on our watch. I have  
14 been elected to preserve the quality of life  
15 that we have here, and I intend on doing my

16 job.

17 We do have the right to control our  
18 own destiny, and this is our township.

19 (Applause.)

20 MAYOR SHAMEY: With that, is there a  
21 motion to close the public hearing and reopen  
22 the hearing, the regular hearing?

23 MS. ALLEN: So moved.

24 MS. MUIR: Second.

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: I said is there a

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1 motion to close the public hearing and reopen  
2 the regular meeting. There was a motion and a  
3 second. May I continue?

4 MS. MEKOVETZ: Yes.

5 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a motion on  
6 Ordinance No. 04-2006? Let's do this again.  
7 Is there a motion to close the public hearing  
8 and reopen the regular meeting?

9 MR. AURIEMMA: So moved.

10 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a second?

11 MS. ALLEN: Second.

12 MAYOR SHAMEY: All in favor, say aye.

13 (On roll call, all members voted in

14 the affirmative.)

15 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a motion on

16 Ordinance 04-2006?

17 MR. AURIEMMA: I make a motion to

18 adopt Ordinance 04-2006.

19 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a second?

20 MS. ALLEN: There is a second.

21 MAYOR SHAMEY: Roll call.

22 (On roll call, all members voted in

23 the affirmative.)

24 MAYOR SHAMEY: Ladies and gentlemen,

25 that will conclude this public hearing.

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1 Let me get my agenda back again and  
2 get to the public hearings. We have concluded  
3 Public Hearing No. 1 and we were on Public  
4 Hearing No. 2. This is a public hearing on  
5 Ordinance 01-2006, an ordinance to provide for  
6 the acceptance of a stream corridor protection  
7 easement and a right-of-way easement for  
8 roadway purposes from Mary T. Lee, Block 12,  
9 Lot 12, and new Lot 12.02 in the Township of  
10 Readington, County of Hunterdon and State of  
11 New Jersey.

12 Is there a motion to open the matter

13 for a public hearing?

14 Is there a motion to close the public  
15 hearing?

16 MR. AURIEMMA: So moved.

17 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a second?

18 MS. ALLEN: Yes.

19 MAYOR SHAMEY: Public comment on

20 Ordinance 01-2006? There being none, is there  
21 a motion to close the public hearing and  
22 reopen the regular meeting?

23 MR. AURIEMMA: So moved.

24 MS. MUIR: Second.

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: All in favor, say aye.

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1 (On roll call, all members voted in  
2 the affirmative.)

3 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a motion on

4 Ordinance 01-2006?

5 MS. MUIR: Yes, I will make a motion.

6 MR. AURIEMMA: Second.

7 MAYOR SHAMEY: Roll call.

8 (On roll call, all members voted in  
9 the affirmative.)

10 MAYOR SHAMEY: Where is Mr. Gatti?

11 MS. MEKOVETZ: He stepped out of the

12 room.

13 MAYOR SHAMEY: Everybody else voted  
14 yes, okay.

15 Next is Public Hearing No. 03-2006, an  
16 ordinance authorizing the conveyance of a fee  
17 simple interest in property known as Lot 15,  
18 Lots 5, 27 and 29, to the New Jersey  
19 Department of Environmental Protection under  
20 the Green Acres Program.

21 Is there a motion to open this matter  
22 to the public?

23 MS. ALLEN: So moved.

24 MR. AURIEMMA: Second.

25 MAYOR SHAMEY: All in favor.

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1 (On roll call, all members voted in  
2 the affirmative.)

3 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there anything from  
4 the public on this matter?

5 Is there a motion to close the public  
6 hearing?

7 (Whereupon, the public hearing was  
8 closed.)

9 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a motion to

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accept this ordinance 03-2006?

MR. AURIEMMA: Yes.

MS. MUIR: Second.

MAYOR SHAMEY: Roll call.

(On roll call, all members voted in the affirmative.)

MAYOR SHAMEY: And Ordinance No. 02-2006, an ordinance to provide for the acceptance of an easement dedicated on a portion of Block 94, Lot 6, for drainage purposes in Lazy Brook Road, in the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey.

Is there a motion to open this up to the public?

MR. AURIEMMA: So moved.

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MS. MUIR: Second.

(On roll call, all members voted in the affirmative.)

MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there anyone here on this matter from the public?

Hearing none, is there a motion to close?

MS. ALLEN: Moved to close.

9 MR. AURIEMMA: Second.

10 (On roll call, all members voted in  
11 the affirmative.)

12 MAYOR SHAMEY: Okay. There is no  
13 public comment, is there a motion to close the  
14 public hearing and reopen the regular meeting?

15 MS. MUIR: So moved.

16 MS. ALLEN: Second.

17 MAYOR SHAMEY: All in favor, say aye.

18 (On roll call, all members voted in  
19 the affirmative.)

20 MAYOR SHAMEY: Is there a motion on  
21 the ordinance?

22 MR. AURIEMMA: Motion.

23 MS. ALLEN: Second.

24 (On roll call, all members voted in  
25 the affirmative.)

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1 MAYOR SHAMEY: That concludes the  
2 public hearings. We already covered the new  
3 business. I would ask for a motion to  
4 dispense -- one second. I will ask for a  
5 motion that we dispense with the  
6 Administrator's report and all Committee  
7 reports. Is there a motion to do that?

8 MR. AURIEMMA: There is a motion to  
9 dispense with that.

10 MS. ALLEN: Second.

11 MAYOR SHAMEY: All in favor, say aye.

12 (On roll call, all members voted in  
13 the affirmative.)

14 MAYOR SHAMEY: Are there any comments  
15 from the public? Please, this is not on the  
16 bond ordinance.

17 MRS. SOLOMON: My name is Renee  
18 Solomon, and I am Sharon (inaudible)'s mother.  
19 I spoke with Mr. Gatti on January 1st when I  
20 saw him, and he said the Township Committee  
21 would probably reconsider the sale of 65  
22 acres. I am here this evening to ask if our  
23 attorney may please call Mrs. Dragan?

24 MR. MUIR: Mr. Gatti does not speak  
25 for the Committee.

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1 MAYOR SHAMEY: Why don't you have your  
2 attorney send Ms. Dragan a letter, okay.

3 Are there any further comments from  
4 the public? Is there a motion to adjourn this  
5 meeting?

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MR. MUIR: So moved.

MR. AURIEMMA: Second.

(Whereupon, the meeting was  
adjourned.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JACQUELINE KLAPP, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, holding License No. 30X100034700 do hereby certify that foregoing is a true and accurate transcript as taken to the best of my ability.

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JACQUELINE KLAPP, CSR 30X100034700